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ABSTRACT

This curriculum is designed to assist Catholic school teachers and parish catechists in their efforts to foster a pro-life attitude in students in grades 9-12. Following an introduction is the curriculum, which features six lessons. These are: (1) The miracle of human life; (2) Responsible parenthood versus abortion; (3) Abortion is no solution; (4) Abortion and the Supreme Court; (5) Abortion and human rights; and (6) The church--community of concern. Student handouts are included in the lessons, and a series of fetal development visuals are appended. (DB)

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Choose Life!

UNBORN CHILDREN AND THE RIGHT TO LIFE

Senior High Level

BROWN ROA Publishing Media
NCEA

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Senior High Level: Grades 9-12

BROWN ROA Publishing Media
NCEA

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Dr. William E. May
Censor Deputatus
Imprimatur
✚ James Cardinal Hickey, S.T.D., J.C.D.
Archbishop of Washington
July 30, 1991

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Foreword

It was on the occasion of an early meeting of the then newly forming National Federation for Life that Sister Catherine T. McNamee, C.S.J., President of the National Catholic Educational Association, made a gracious and welcome offer. She told me that the NCEA would be willing to develop pro-life curricular materials. In my judgment, that offer was of immense importance, and I was deeply gratified when Father Francis D. Kelly, Executive Director of the NCEA's Department of Religious Education, accepted the responsibility to see the project through. The Knights of Malta American Association President, Mr. J. Peter Grace, guaranteed the funding needed. The results speak for themselves.

Much as I, personally, have believed that the permissive laws of our nation and our states regarding abortion categorically must be changed, even more crucial a need is that minds and hearts be educated to understand the sacredness of every human person as made in the image and likeness of God. No law can ever make morally right the deliberate, direct destruction of **any** innocent human life. That is a moral absolute. Millions of people, including the young, have come to believe that whatever the civil law permits must be acceptable. The entire orientation must be turned around. Without education, such will not happen.

I am deeply grateful to the NCEA and for all responsible for giving us an educational tool that has been critically needed for so long. I suspect that parents and teachers all over the country, and perhaps throughout the world, will share my gratitude.

John Cardinal O'Connor
Archbishop of New York
Chairman, NCCB Pro-Life Activities Committee

Preface

Catholic school religion teachers and parish catechists perform a precious and invaluable service for the faith life of tens of thousands of young people across the United States. Their efforts to fulfill the mandate of the Second Vatican Council "to foster a faith that is living, conscious and active" merit our admiration and support.

This pro-life curriculum is intended as a service and support for our teachers and catechists in their crucial efforts at moral catechesis to foster a pro-life attitude in those they teach.

Abortion is one of the great moral issues of our time. Tragically, we find that even some of our own Catholic people are confused by the dominance of relativism and subjectivism in our culture. The result is that the absolute value of life and the clarity of God's will in this issue are obscured for them.

The moral issue of abortion is a litmus test for the application of Christian moral principles. Catechists and religion teachers should be willing to speak out for the unborn and emphasize the principle of the absolute sanctity of human life. The fact that 1.6 million abortions are committed every year in our country is a national scandal. One wonders what judgement the prophets of the Old Testament would forbode if they were witnesses to such evil. Are we not called to a prophetic role in our day?

In the face of this clear moral evil religious educators are neglectful if they do not present these principles to their students. To assist teachers, the NCEA in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, has prepared these materials with the assistance of a wide spectrum of theologians, health care professionals, curriculum experts, etc. I express my gratitude to those listed in this publication as critical reviewers for the time and care they gave in helping develop this resource.

In a special way, I express my personal gratitude to His Eminence, John Cardinal O'Connor, Archbishop of New York and chairman of the United States Bishops' Committee for Pro-Life Activities for his support and for the leadership he has given to this cause; to Mr. J. Peter Grace and the Knights of Malta, whose generous and indispensable contribution contributed to the writing and publication of these materials; and, finally, to Mr. Ernest T. Nedder, President of BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, and Sandra Hirstein, whose openness to such a project and whose professional skills have been crucial in bringing it to realization.

It is now our prayerful hope that the teachers and catechists who use this resource may find it a sensitive and effective means of helping our Catholic young people understand the beauty, truth and nobility of the Church's teaching about respect for human life.

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Introduction

In February of 1990, in Washington, DC, bishops, catechetical leaders, and publishers heard the need expressed for a curriculum specifically aimed at helping young Catholics understand and heed the Church's teaching on abortion. As a result of that expressed need, the National Catholic Education Association, under the leadership of Rev. Francis D. Kelly, in conjunction with BROWN Publishing–ROA Media, decided to act. NCEA determined to sponsor the development of curriculum resources designed to present in clear and certain terms the Church's teaching on abortion and the right to life of unborn children.

While fully aware of the importance of seeing the Church's teaching on abortion as but one part of its teaching on the sanctity of all human life from conception to natural death (a "consistent life ethic" as it has been termed), those involved in the development of this teaching resource also recognized the particular need that exists among Catholics for specific education regarding the issue of abortion. Why is there a particular need for education on this issue? It is because, as the bishops of the United States have reminded us, abortion is a pivotal issue.

"Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous revulsion at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war?" ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 285)

The Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge. "Hence it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

It is very important that Catholic young people have the opportunity to focus upon and understand the Church's teaching on this fundamental and foundational issue.

For this reason, *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has a consciously limited scope. It has four specific goals:

- To promote recognition of the unborn as human beings
- To promote respect for all human life, particularly the unborn
- To promote responsibility to care for those who are most defenseless, particularly unborn children
- To promote greater awareness of the scientific, historical, social, and moral information pertinent to the unborn

Contained within these four goals are six principles. Our objective is to help young Catholics recognize and act in light of these truths:

1. Every human being is a unique person made in the image and likeness of God; therefore, at every stage of life, every human being is important, deserving of care, and has a right to life.
2. Human life begins at conception—not at birth nor at any other arbitrary point beyond conception.
3. Human development is a continuous, gradual process that begins at conception and lasts throughout life.
4. Abortion is the intentional removal of an unborn human child from its mother so as to kill the human life already begun.

5. Abortion is contrary to the prime goal of human society which is "to protect human rights and secure basic justice for all members of society." ("Economic Justice for All," no. 122)

6. God's will is that people choose life, and not destroy it; therefore the Church opposes abortion and supports many alternatives to abortion.

The desired outcomes of the curriculum are listed below. It is hoped that, after using *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life,* that young Catholics will be able to do the following:

1 Respect for Human Life

- Explain what it means to be a unique human being.
- Explain why the right to life is a human right.
- Tell what the Bible says about life in the womb. (See Jeremiah 1:5; Psalm 139; Luke 1:39–44.)
- Name some ways in which the community supports and cares for pregnant women and families and children in need.
- Tell what "to respect life" means.

2 Beginning of Human Life

- Explain how human life is special among all other life.
- Tell when human life begins.
- Define *conception* and describe what happens immediately after conception.
- Explain the special responsibility that accompanies our capacity to cooperate with God in bringing new human beings into existence.

3 Gestation of Human Life

- Tell where and how the developing baby grows.
- Describe stages of fetal development.
- Describe the capabilities of unborn babies.
- Describe what unborn babies can feel (or experience).
- Compare the capabilities of an unborn baby with a newborn.

4 Destruction of Human Life

- Tell what abortion is.
- Give some important statistics regarding abortion.
- Describe the major methods of abortion.
- Describe complications associated with abortion.
- Explain why the Church holds abortion to be a most abhorrent moral evil.

5 Social Care of Human Life

- Describe ways in which our society promotes anti-life attitudes.
- Explain why a society committed to the defense of human rights and dignity must establish a structure of justice that provides legal protection for all human beings—from conception onward.
- Explain the Supreme Court decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton* and why a Christian response to the court's decisions would be to overturn them.
- Compare the Supreme Court's position on abortion to the Court's pre-Civil War position on slavery.
- Explain why abortion is not a realistic solution to the following social problems: "unwanted children," teen pregnancy, rape, incest, and overpopulation.
- Explain why abortion is not simply a private matter.

6 Protection of Human Life

- Explain the Church's opposition to abortion and its response to the major arguments of abortion-rights groups.
- List the Christian values that are violated by abortion.
- Name alternatives to abortion.
- List the ways the Church supports pro-life activities.
- Describe the goals of the Right-to-Life movement and describe ways to spread the pro-life message.

This resource book is one of three books that form the total curriculum. It is designed for students in grades 9–12. Similar resource books have been designed for children in grades 5–6 or 7–8. Each resource book contains:

- a general introduction to the resource book
- suggestions as to how the curriculum might be infused into other curriculum areas (for example, science, health, family life, human sexuality, and other related areas)
- 6 lesson plans per level (for approximately 30 to 45 minutes of class time)
- black line activities, handouts, and such, for in-class or take-home use
- parent involvement suggestions

Those involved in the development of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* hope that, by educating young people about the issue of the right-to-life of unborn children, greater respect for the value of all human life will result. As the bishops of the United States have said:

In focusing attention on the sanctity of human life, therefore, we hope to generate a greater respect for the life of each person in our society. We are confident that greater respect for human life will result from continuing the public discussion of abortion and from efforts to shape our laws so as to protect the life of all persons, including the unborn. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities")

Lesson Plans, Methods, and Resources

The structure of *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* has been designed with the needs of teachers in mind. To help teachers quickly recognize the content and methodology involved in each lesson, the same simple overview begins each lesson presentation.

Lesson Number	Title
Objective	Identifies the content addressed in the lesson and a hoped-for student behavior
Summary	Provides an overview of the concepts covered in the lesson, together with the procedures for presenting the content
Time	Alerts teacher to the time needed for presenting the lesson
Teacher Preparation	Informs the teacher about the materials and/or resources needed for teaching the lesson
Procedure	Summarizes, in step-by-step fashion, the procedures and activities that make up the lesson
Evaluation	Suggests an activity that allows the teacher to determine whether students understand the concept and can demonstrate the behavior defined in the objective
Enrichment	Suggests optional activities for further developing concepts within the lesson

Following the overview, there is a teacher background essay. This essay, while hardly exhaustive, provides a concise explanation of the main ideas to be presented in the body of the lesson.

Immediately after the essay is a step-by-step description of the teaching procedure for the lesson. The teaching procedure follows a fairly standard format:

- an introductory activity to generate interest and involvement in the topic
- the presentation of the main ideas for the lesson
- further exploration and clarification of the main ideas
- a suggested activity for applying the main ideas in some practical way

A closing prayer is provided to conclude the lesson procedure. Following the closing prayer is an optional home activity, designed to reinforce the lesson and to foster parent involvement in the learning process.

Each lesson also provides teachers with the handouts and work sheets they will need as they teach each lesson. These black-line masters may be duplicated as needed.

While it is not necessary to follow the lesson plans slavishly, teachers should remain true to the basic aim and content of each lesson. Adapt them to your local circumstances, to your own teaching style, to the availability of resources, and to the readiness and ability of your students. For example, if you are able to obtain a guest speaker who is an expert on the topic to be covered (for example, a doctor who is willing to describe current abortion methods); adapt that lesson plan accordingly.

A basic methodology, generally regarded as an effective teaching/learning model, is used in the lesson plans. There is a balance of student involvement and teacher input, as well as a balance of group activity and individual work/reflection. The lessons also attempt to provide a balance of left-brain, analytic activities with right-brain imaging and creative activities. It is presumed that the lessons in this teaching resource will be taught in this general manner and not be reduced to a series of "lectures."

Each lesson, as presented in this resource, is a complete teaching package. No additional resources are required. However, several optional resources are identified in each lesson. All the films/videos are pertinent to the topic of the lesson. If available to you, they can be used in place of, or as a reinforcement of, your own presentation. Likewise, the suggested print material is very informative and attractively printed, often including highly effective graphics. These can be used to teach the main ideas of the lesson or as reinforcement. If time and budget allow, seriously consider acquiring some of these print materials to use with the lessons for which they are suggested. Also, do not hesitate to seek the service of outside speakers if any are available to you. Your diocesan Respect Life or Family Life office may be able to provide you with a list of speakers in your area who are experts on one or another of the topics contained in these lessons.
NOTE: The factual information and data (statistics and so forth) contained in the lesson plan materials represent what was available when the lesson plans were developed. Given the contemporary nature of the abortion issue, new data and new findings from scientific studies appear regularly. Also, national statistics may not reflect realities in your local community. It is important to point this out to your students. As you become aware of new data of a reliable nature, adjust the data in these lessons accordingly. Finally, because the abortion issue is very contemporary and controversial, it receives much news coverage on a regular basis. Whenever possible, integrate current stories into these lessons, especially if they deal with the issue at the local level.

Integrating *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into the present curriculum given the life-and-death urgency of the abortion issue, as well as its timely nature, there is no need to make excuses for including it in the curriculum of any Catholic school or religious education program. It fits logically, of course, within the religion curriculum under a variety of topics: for example, within the teaching of the Ten Commandments and specifically the Fifth Commandment; within a course on the Church's teachings on social justice; within any course on morality and ethics; and within a course on marriage, family, and parenting. It also fits logically within a course on sexuality education. It could easily be included in a biology course that deals with human reproduction. There is a close connection between this Unit and various subjects covered in history, civics, and social sciences—in so far as these deal with basic human rights and the government's obligation to protect these rights. These subjects would include slavery in the United States, the Jewish Holocaust under Nazi Germany, or the nature of human freedom and the basic rights of citizens.

Therefore, it should not be difficult to find an appropriate place to integrate *Choose Life! Unborn Children and the Right to Life* into your existing curriculum. There is one word of caution. The material has been developed precisely as a Unit—that is, the lessons build upon one another. Thus, it will be most effective when the lessons are presented fairly close to each other. Presenting one lesson a week for six consecutive weeks, for example, would afford the students time to assimilate and integrate the material, while also allowing them to connect each lesson with the previous one. The effectiveness of the lessons will be diminished if the interval between them is too lengthy.

Parental Involvement

The primacy of the role of parents in the religious education of their children, especially in those areas related to human sexuality has been widely fostered by the Church in documents such as *Educational Guidance in Human Love* by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1983). Those who implement any program related to human sexuality, such as the *Choose Life!* program must always keep the primacy of parents in mind.

Parents should be directly involved in the decision to implement the *Choose Life!* curriculum in their school or parish. Teachers should be made aware of the importance of supporting parents in those responsibilities related to human sexuality education, and parents will support teachers and programs that help them in this task.

Not all parents are well versed in the Church's position on abortion. Many need assistance in working with this issue. The *Choose Life!* program can serve as a vehicle to help both parents and children better understand the foundational and fundamental nature of the right to life issue.

In relation to the primacy of the parental role, the educational institution has a duty to parents. This duty has a number of dimensions:

1. The duty to involve the parents from the very beginning in the choice of the program and the choice of instructors, and to provide the parents with a means of ongoing communication and evaluation.

2. The duty to provide parents with clear, concise explanations of what is being done in the program.

3. The duty to provide parents with an opportunity to deepen their own understanding of the Church's position on unborn children and the right to life. The formation of parents in regard to this issue is varied. They will appreciate the opportunity to learn what the program can offer.

4. The duty to assure parents that the program is truly consistent with the position of the Church on the fundamental issue of right to life by providing them with access to the resources relevant to the program.

5. The duty to involve parents during the course of the program and to seek out their feedback, so that it might be integrated into the lesson planning process.

In helping parents to deepen their own understanding and helping them to take responsibility for helping their children better understand this vital issue, the school or parish fulfills its own responsibilities. All involved thus benefit.

Organizations

The following national organizations are an excellent source of background materials, current statistics and various teacher aids. They can also provide information concerning regional offices in your area.

Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth St., NE
Washington, DC 20017

National Right to Life Committee
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004

National Right to Life Committee:
Education Trust
417 7th Street, NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20004

Your diocesan Respect Life and/or Family Life office (Most diocesan Respect Life agencies maintain a library of pro-life materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals. Most also maintain a speakers' bureau.)

Publishers

The following publishers have a strong commitment to the pro-life movement and will provide a current catalogue of books, materials, teacher aids, and audio-visuals.

Life-Cycle Books
PO Box 792
Lewiston, NY 14092–0792

Hayes Publishing, Inc.
6304 Hamilton Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, VA 22090

Easton Publishing Company
PO Box 1064
Jefferson City, MO 65102

Ignatius Press
15 Oakland Avenue
Harrison, NY 10528

Liturgical Press
Collegeville, MN 56321

Church Documents

From the Vatican

"Declaration on Abortion," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, November 18, 1974.

"Educational Guidance in Human Love," Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, March, 1983.

"Christifidelis Laici," Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1988.

From the National Conference of Catholic Bishops

"Statement on Abortion," April 22, 1970.

"Declaration on Abortion," November 18, 1970.

"Pastoral Message on Abortion," February 13, 1973.

"Resolution on the Pro-Life Constitutional Amendment," November 13, 1973.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," November 20, 1975.

"Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation," November 14, 1985.

"Resolution on Abortion," November 1989.

"Human Sexuality, A Catholic Perspective for Education and Lifelong Learning," February, 1991.

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Abortion Information for Classroom Teachers, National Right to Life Committee Educational Trust.

First Nine Months of Life by Geraldine Lux Flanagan (Simon and Schuster).

Life Magazine Reprint #27: "Life Before Birth," Time-Life Multi-Media, Paramus, NJ.

Abortion: The Silent Holocaust, Fr. John Powell, SJ, Argus Communications, Dallas, TX.

Handbook on Abortion, Dr. and Mrs. J.C. Willke, Hayes Publications, Cincinnati, OH.

Let's Talk to Teens About Chastity, Molly Kelly, The Center for Learning, Rocky River, OH.

Respect Life Program Manual (Published Annually), National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, DC.

To Rescue the Future: The Pro-Life Movement in the 1980s, David Andrusko, Life-Cycle Books, Lewiston, NY.

The Least of These, Curt Young, Moody Press, Chicago, IL.

"We are the People Who Believe in Life" and "100 Years of Catholic Social Teachings," *Catholic Update* Reprints, St. Anthony Press, Cincinnati, OH.

Pamphlets

"Abortion: Question and Answers," Cardinal John O'Connor, Archdiocese of New York, July 1990.

Videos

"Abortion: Does Anyone Really Care?" Rev. John Powell, Franciscan Communications.

"Abortion, It's Legal, Common, and Wrong," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Abortion, the Time Is Now," Don Bosco Multimedia.

"Downs Syndrome Blessing," Womanity.

"The Story of Mary Jo," Credence Cassettes.

"Teens and Chastity," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

"Abortion Issues," Molly Kelly, Don Bosco Multimedia

Lesson One
Overview

The Miracle of Human Life

Objective

Students will review the process and stages of human development from conception to birth.

Summary

In this lesson the students will review in detail the various stages and significant moments in fetal development. This focus will illustrate that, throughout pregnancy, beginning at conception, a unique human being is present in the mother's womb.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

Introductory quiz, teacher input/discussion using a Human Development Review handout, and a Case Study activity in small groups

Evaluation

The students' responses to the Case Study activity will illustrate how well they have grasped the main point of this lesson.

(Note: The teacher may wish to develop a formal quiz, to be given at a later class, on the content of the Human Development handout.)

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Window on the Womb (video)
Alfred Derby, MD
1115 Christmas Tree Lane
Spokane, WA 99203

When Life Begins (film)
McGraw-Hill Films
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10020

First Days of Life (film/video)
For Life
Drawer 1279
Tyron, NC 28782

Life before Birth (filmstrip)
or *Life Magazine* Reprint #27
Time-Life Multi-Media
100 Eisenhower Dr.
Paramus, NJ 07652

When You Were Formed in Secret (booklet)
Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, PA 22090

Lesson One

Teacher Background

The Miracle of Human Life

This lesson is foundational to the Unit. It focuses on the key issue in the abortion debate—the question of when a human life begins.

The issue is addressed by reviewing with students the stages of human development prior to birth, from the moment of conception onwards. There is something truly marvelous and wonderful about this process from the moment of first cell division. This development is amazingly rapid, yet very precise and delicate. For example, within twenty-eight days after the ovum and sperm unite, the heart of the baby begins to beat. From that ovum and sperm evolve a brain and nervous system more complex than the world's largest computer, and the earliest functions of that brain and nervous system are observable within only forty-three days after conception takes place!

Whenever possible, affirm the awesome dignity and responsibility that the gift of sexuality bestows in regard to the transmission of human life. It is through the life-giving power of sexuality, bestowed on us by God, that we become God's co-creative partners in the passing on of life.

It can be presumed that many students will have already learned something about fetal development. Within the context of a review of these facts, your real challenge is to help them grow in their appreciation of the mystery and the miracle of human life that underlies those facts.

This personal awareness and appreciation provides the best defense against the argument of abortion advocates that, in the early stages of pregnancy, the developing fetus is "not yet a human being." You need to admit the fact that there is no *scientific* agreement on the precise moment when the developing fetus is a human person with human rights. The question is not a scientific one, but a philosophical one.

There is disagreement over the meaning of "person" and whether all living human individuals are persons. Some claim that only a being actually capable of reasoning, making choices, relating to others, etc., is a

person. But the framework for understanding the concept of "person" is the human being. It is discriminating to exclude some classes of human beings from personhood in order to deny them their human rights. This kind of reasoning was used to justify the legality of slavery, and it is wrong. To exclude living human beings from personhood is unjust and discriminatory.

On the other hand, though, neither can we scientifically demonstrate that there is any point in its development that the fetus *is not* a human person with human rights. Left alone in the safe environment of the womb, the zygote, the unique human being that comes into existence at conception, within nine months becomes a full grown baby—as opposed to a "glob of cells," a vegetable, or some other life form. Long before that, however, the fetus is easily recognizable as a human being and, before its sixth month, the baby can actually live and continue to grow outside the mother's womb if given proper medical assistance. Despite all of this, it remains legal in most states for a mother to obtain an abortion "on demand" any time during the entire pregnancy.

Admitting that the zygote is a human being in its very first stages of life is as much an issue of common sense and intellectual honesty as it is one of scientific observation. At conception, when the ovum is fertilized and the DNA of the mother and father combine, a new human being is present. Calling the newly conceived human being anything less is simply to contradict logic and common sense. To this common sense, we as Catholics add our convictions—convictions that are rooted in faith and in the teachings of the Church.

In the mystery of the Incarnation, the "Word became flesh and dwelled among us." In taking on our humanity, Jesus became like us in every way, except sin. Like us he was once an unborn child, who grew and developed in his mother's womb.

"Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ." ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

While the fact sheet provided for this lesson can be a useful tool, the best way to help students grow in their understanding and appreciation of the miracle of fetal development is to use one of the films identified in the suggested resources for this lesson.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin session by distributing Handout 1.1, "The First Nine Months." Ask students to complete the worksheet.

• After sufficient time, ask students to share their work. Encourage discussion on the final question. Do not challenge incorrect answers at this time; explain that the facts will be reviewed in the next handout.

Present Main Ideas

• Give out Handout 1.2, "Human Development." Review the fact sheet item by item, allowing students to ask questions. Also instruct students to compare the answers they gave on their first worksheet with the information on the fact sheet. Throughout this review, continually stress the miracle of this development, from the moment of conception onward, as well as how rapidly this development takes place. (Note: If possible use one of the AV resources on fetal development as part of this presentation.)

Explore Further

• After the students have a basic grasp of the facts related to fetal development, make these observations:

1. Presently, most states allow abortion "on demand" any time during the first six months of the pregnancy. Supporters of abortion justify this practice by saying that what is being aborted is not yet a human being. It is, many of them say, nothing more than a "glob of cells."

2. Pro-life supporters challenge this position. The fact is that—**from conception to the time of birth, nothing new is added.** The zygote, the unique human being that comes into existence at conception, in a real sense, is self-contained. It is alive; it is human; it is unique. At no point during the nine months can we say, "Now, something new has been added that transforms this glob of cells into a human being." All the human qualities and characteristics are already present in the zygote.

Apply

• Form class into all-girl groups and all-boy groups. Give the groups the appropriate form of Handout 1.3, "Case Study." (Form A is for girls, Form B is for boys.)

Ask groups to develop their responses. Groups then share results with total class. Compare the approaches the girls used in their Case Study with those used by the boys. Comment and clarify as necessary.

• After sufficient discussion, invite the students to prayer. Allow a few moments for quiet reflection and then have one of the students read Psalm 139:13–16. Invite students to reflect quietly on this question: Do you think there was ever a time in your existence when God regarded you as just a worthless "glob of cells" that could be disposed of? After time for reflection, close with this or a similar prayer:

> *Creator God, we are indeed wonderfully made. Each of us is a living miracle and a visible proof of Your great love and Your great wisdom, from the first moment of conception and throughout the nine months we grew peacefully in our mother's womb. As we give You thanks for our own lives, deepen our appreciation and respect for the miracle of each human being, especially those who are still growing in their mother's womb. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to ask their mother to share with them some of her memories of how she felt and what she experienced during her pregnancy with that student.

Handout 1.1 The First Nine Months

Instructions: Based on your present knowledge, list the kinds of development that the growing baby grows through during each period of pregnancy. Then answer the final question, based on your present understanding and convictions.

Within the first two hours of conception:

By the end of the first month:

By the end of the second month:

By the end of the third month:

By the end of the fourth month:

By the end of the fifth month:

By the end of the sixth month:

Question: Aware that the developing human being in the mother's womb is dependent on the mother, discuss the correlation between killing an unborn human being and killing persons who are handicapped or elderly (persons who are also dependent upon others for their survival). Do you think that the "invisible" nature of the unborn makes it easier to do to them what one would not do to other human beings whom one can see?

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Handout 1.2 Human Development

First Trimester (from conception to end of 12th week, first 84 days)

Moment of Conception: A human life begins the moment the father's sperm cell penetrates the mother's ovum and the DNA of the father unites with the DNA of the mother. At that moment, all the qualities necessary for the development of a new human person are present. Nothing new is added during the next nine months. Moreover, all the unique qualities that the person inherits from the mother and father are present at that time: sex, hair, eye and skin color, facial characteristics, adult size, even intelligence and inherited emotional traits. We are dealing with a unique human being at that moment of conception, a human being unlike any other who has ever existed or who will ever exist.

Day One: Cell division begins within two to three hours after conception, a process that will repeat over and over until, 266 days later, one fertilized cell (smaller than this period .) will have grown into a baby approximately seven pounds in weight and consisting of millions and millions of complex cells.

Day Seven: The growing baby, now consisting of approximately 126 cells, has left the fallopian tube and attaches itself to the wall of its mother's womb.

During Week Two: Certain of the baby's cells provide the basis for the development of the amniotic sac, the placenta, and the umbilical cord—the "life support systems" the baby will use the next nine months to draw nurture from its mother.

During Week Three: Development begins to speed up. By the 18th day blood cells begin to form and the heart in rudimentary form begins a tentative beat. By the 21st day the brain, backbone, spinal column, and nervous system are forming. The eyes have begun to form. Simple kidneys, a liver, and a digestive tract are already taking shape.

By the End of Week Four: The baby is no larger than an apple seed, yet it is now 10,000 times larger than the fertilized ovum at conception. The baby's heart begins to beat regularly by the 25th day and begins to circulate blood in the baby. Arm and leg buds are already beginning to appear. Internal organs, spinal cord, and nervous system are all observable.

Week Five: By day 30, ears and nasal organs begin to form. By day 33, fingers begin to appear, spinal vertebrae appear, and the nose and upper jaw begin to form. Eye color pigment is present.

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By the End of Week Six: Internal ear is almost complete. By the 42nd day the skeleton, still composed of cartilage, is complete and reflexes are present. The baby will respond to touch when its lips are stroked. The arms and legs are formed, including fingers and toes. The baby is one-half inch long.

By the End of Week Eight: Brain waves can be recorded by the 43rd day. Muscles have formed and are capable of reflex action. All facial features are present and inherited family traits can be recognized. Arm and leg segments are formed, as well as hands and feet, toes and fingers, complete with finger prints. All organs are present and functioning, at least in rudimentary fashion. The baby is capable of swimming and doing flips. The baby is capable of feeling and reacts to touch. The baby is probably capable of feeling pain by now. Veins and arteries are functioning. The baby's heart has been beating for over a month already.

Week Nine through Twelve: During the next twenty-eight days the baby develops rapidly and acquires many new qualities and abilities. The baby begins to squint, swallow, and make a fist. Because its vocal cords are complete, it could cry if outside its mother's womb. It can feel pain. Fingernails and teeth are forming. It inhales and exhales fluid in its lungs. What had earlier been jerky movements of muscles now become fluid and graceful. The baby literally begins to exercise its muscles by regular movements. The baby's sex is clearly identifiable. The baby can distinguish between sweet and sour. The baby begins to sleep and waken, to hear, drink, digest, and excrete. Yet, by the end of this first twelve weeks (84 days) since conception, the baby is still less than three inches long and still weighs about one ounce. But it can hardly be described as a "glob of cells."

Second Trimester (Months Four through Six, Days 85 to 178)

Month Four: By the end of month three, the baby is virtually complete in terms of all its "essential parts" and these parts are all functioning. All that is really left is some fine tuning and growth in size and weight. For example, during this fourth month, the baby grows to about half the length it will be at birth, but does not gain that much weight yet. Hair begins to appear, including eyelashes and eyebrows. The baby begins to suck its thumb. Movements become more vigorous, and the mother begins to feel the baby move for the first time. Taste buds and saliva glands appear and the palate fuses. The baby begins to urinate regularly and will swallow 250–700 cc. of liquids daily.

Months Five and Six: The baby will grow to about 14 inches by the end of the sixth month. Fat begins to accumulate under the skin. The baby can recognize its mother's voice, will respond to music, and can distinguish light from dark. The baby develops a regular sleeping and waking rhythm. It is possible, as early as

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the fifth month, for a baby to survive if it had to be removed from its mother's womb, provided it was given special medical help. In many cases, the baby definitely could survive outside the womb by the end of the sixth month, with proper medical care. Yet, our present laws continue to allow abortion on demand up until the end of the sixth month of pregnancy!

Third Trimester (Months Seven through Nine, Days 179 to 266)

During this last month, growth, exercise, and sleep are the main events in the baby's development. The baby gains two thirds of its birth weight and close to half its total length during these last three months. Eventually, it grows too large to be able to move around in the mother's womb and begins to position itself for birth. On the average, a baby will weigh seven pounds and measure between nineteen to twenty-one inches long at birth.

Our physical development, which began at the moment of conception, continues after we leave our mother's womb and will continue for about twenty-five years, until we reach full physical maturity. But we can continue to grow intellectually and spiritually throughout our entire life.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

Scientists tell us that, from the moment of conception, the child is a complete and rapidly growing being, endowed with the characteristics of human life. Although dependent on a privileged environment for development, the child in the womb has a life of its own. . . . The child in the womb is human. ("Declaration on Abortion," nos. 1, 4)

Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

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Handout 1.3

Case Study—Form A for Girls

Your best friend tells you that she is pregnant and is planning to get an abortion. She tells you it is okay because she is only two months pregnant and that wouldn't be killing a baby. What reasons would you try to give to her to explain that she actually would be killing her baby, a real human being?

Case Study—Form B for Boys

Your best friend tells you that he got his girlfriend pregnant. He really loves her but he is going to ask her to get an abortion. He can't get married or support a baby now. He says an abortion is okay because she is not quite two months pregnant, and it isn't really a baby yet that she'd be destroying. What reasons would you give to explain to your friend that he would be killing his own child?

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Lesson Two
Overview

Responsible Parenthood versus Abortion

Objective

The students will make the connection between parenting, sexual irresponsibility, and abortion; they will deepen their appreciation for the importance of using their own gift of sexuality in a responsible manner.

Summary

In this lesson the students will examine the inherent dignity and responsibility of parenting. They will examine the connection between sexual irresponsibility and abortion. They will reflect on their own need to act morally and responsibly in regard to the gift of sexuality.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handout, a Bible

Procedure

Initial worksheet activity, teacher input and student discussion, brainstorming activity, small group activity to develop strategies for promoting chastity among teens

Evaluation

The ideas expressed in the final activity will indicate whether or not the students have understood the main ideas of this lesson.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

When, Jenny, When? (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Girl in a Freefall (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

"Femininity and Masculinity,"
"Dating," "Intimacy," "Marriage and Life"
Issues In Sexuality Series
BROWN Publishing-ROA Media
2460 Kerper Blvd.
Dubuque, IA 52001

Lesson Two

Teacher Background

Responsible Parenthood versus Abortion

Against the backdrop of the miracle of human development described in the first lesson, you now want to focus on the awesome dignity and the awesome responsibility God bestows on us by giving us the gift of our sexuality. This dignity and responsibility is experienced in a special way by the pregnant mother, of course. She carries within her for nine months this new person who totally depends upon her for survival and health. Only those who actually experience pregnancy can fully appreciate the wonder and joy of being pregnant—as well as the mixed emotions, physical discomforts, and personal inconveniences that go with it. But throughout history, society has always treated the pregnant woman with a special respect and concern, based on an instinctive awareness that she has been entrusted with a special role in society.

Even if the father is not privileged with this intimate experience of parenting within his own body, he too can rightly experience pride and dignity in knowing that the baby growing within his wife is his child, the fruit of his own body, and the inheritor of his own gifts and qualities. Likewise, the father shares equal responsibility—and should have an equal right—to ensure that the growing baby is properly protected and nurtured during his wife's pregnancy. It should be noted here that, under present law, in most states a mother can decide to have an abortion without the knowledge or consent of the father. Thus, the father's legitimate rights as a parent can be ignored legally.

In this context, two points should be made. First, the more one understands the awesome dignity and responsibility—for both the mother and the father—involved in conceiving a child, the more abhorrent the idea of abortion becomes. To destroy one's own child has always been considered a particularly terrible crime. Appreciating the horror of such an act is easily seen after the child has been born. But the horror of abortion, which involves the same

kind of violent action, is not always so easily recognized.

While this course and this lesson are not intended as a substitute for a course in the Church's teachings on sexual morality, it is important to stress the causal relationship between the sexually active behavior of youth and adults outside of marriage and the incidence of abortion among that same group. You can do this by stressing with the youth that as many as 50 percent of all abortions are sought because an unintended pregnancy occurred when the partners were practicing what has been called "safe sex." In this light, two points become clear:

1. "Safe sex" isn't actually safe. There is no such thing as "safe sex." You may wish to explore in some detail the fallacies promoted in society regarding "safe sex"— if such a discussion is appropriate for your students.

2. Remind your students that a basic alternative to abortion is the practice of chastity. More than half a million abortions would not occur each year if youth were willing to use their gift of sexuality responsibly and, therefore, practiced chastity rather than engaging in so-called "safe sex."

Throughout the lesson, therefore, continue to affirm in the youth the awesome dignity and responsibility that the gift of their sexuality bestows upon them, precisely because of their capacity to become parents. When sexuality is viewed in total isolation from parenting, as is the tendency in our society today, abortion becomes viewed as a "solution" to a problem rather than as the decision of parents to kill their child.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Divide the class into girls' groups and boys' groups. Give each group a copy of Handout 2.1, "Becoming Parents." Instruct the groups to discuss the issue given on the handout and direct them to provide a summary of the group's responses.

• After sufficient time, ask groups to share their summaries with class. Compare and discuss any significant differences between the responses of the boys' groups and the girls' groups.

• Then ask the students to read and reflect upon the quote at the bottom of the handout sheet. Ask the students to suggest some ways that society seems to see abortion as a "solution" to a problem rather than as a decision to kill a child.

Present Main Ideas

• Building upon the ideas shared by the students, discuss with them the awesome privilege and awesome responsibility involved in bringing new human beings into existence. Point out to them that we literally participate in God's creative activity when we bring into existence unique persons who will continue in existence forever! These unique beings are human beings, possessed of flesh and a living principle of life (or soul), human persons who will live with us forever before God. "When God gives life, God gives it forever" (Pope John Paul II, " 'Stand Up' for Human Life," a homily given on the Mall of the nation's capital by Pope John Paul II on October 7, 1979).

Observe that while the role and experience of the mother and father are quite distinct, each has a share in the dignity and responsibility of parenting from the moment of conception.

• In this context, develop the idea that the more men and women come to appreciate the real meaning of parenting and to understand how their child develops from conception and through the nine months of pregnancy, the less likely that either parent could view abortion as morally acceptable. Point out that common

sense suggests that there is something inherently unnatural about parents choosing to destroy their children at any stage of a child's life, including life in the womb.

• Finally, explain that many youth and young adults seem to have failed to take seriously the inseparable connection between their sexuality and the privilege and responsibility of parenting. When young people are sexually active, the possibility of their becoming parents always exists, because every birth control method has a failure rate, except for chastity. The concept of "sex without worry" as it is presented and understood today is very misleading. Unwed mothers between the ages of 15 and 24 account for almost 60 percent of all the unborn babies killed by abortion each year in our county. About half of those unwed mothers who had abortions were using what they considered a "safe" form of contraception. In short, we could prevent about half of all abortions performed every year if unmarried young people committed themselves to chastity and sexual abstinence.

You might also note that these "safe" forms of contraception are even less helpful in preventing diseases. The fact is, irresponsibility in sexual matters has dire consequences, both in physical and moral terms.

Explore Further

• Pose these or similar questions to the class and, in brainstorming fashion, solicit their responses:

1. What do you feel are some of the reasons that some youth today are sexually active?
2. Why do so many youth who become sexually active seem to be either ignorant or indifferent to the possibility that they could conceive a new human being in the process?

• As the students respond, write their responses on the board. After you have sufficient statements, ask students to identify the key responses to both questions. Leave these lists on the board.

Apply

• Form students into small groups. Ask the groups to imagine that they are a national commission appointed to help deal with the problem of teenage pregnancy. Pass out Handout 2.2. Review the information on the handout with the groups. Each group is to try to come up with several practical strategies for dealing with the causes listed on the board so as to (a) help promote chastity among youth and (b) help youth appreciate the privilege that parenting implies.

• After a sufficient time, ask the groups to share their proposals with the class. Have the class then identify the three best proposals. (Optional Follow-Up: Arrange to meet with interested students outside of class to see if they would want to pursue any of the strategies suggested as a form of peer ministry.)

• Close by inviting the class to pause in silence for a few moments. Then ask a student to read Tobit 8:4–7. After the reading, invite silent reflection on this question: Do I sufficiently appreciate the awesome privilege and responsibility of parenting that comes with my gift of sexuality? Conclude by offering this or a similar prayer:

> *O God and Parent of us all, You show constant love and concern for each person You have called into existence. Help all human parents learn from You how to love and care for their children. Help especially those young fathers and mothers who have conceived a child unintentionally and are now considering aborting it. May they come to love that unborn child and find the courage to care for it as true parents or to allow those to parent it who are willing. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

• Invite the students with their parents to list and compare the kinds of information and services that are available to youth in your community in regard to problem pregnancies.

Handout 2.1 Becoming Parents

Instructions: The desire to have and care for children is deep-seated and as ancient as the human race. It spans all ages and cultures. Discuss examples of this desire that you have seen, and then list the different reasons that you think motivate both men and women to desire to become parents.

Reasons women desire motherhood

Reasons men desire fatherhood

Remember . . .

When sexuality is viewed in total isolation from parenting, abortion is viewed as a "solution" to a problem rather than as a decision by parents to kill their child.

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Handout 2.2 A National Epidemic: Teenage Pregnancy

Did You Know . . . ?

- Births, out of wedlock, as a percentage of all births, increased more than 450 percent in just the last thirty years.
- Of the 1.6 million babies killed by abortion each year in the United States, 60 percent were the babies of unwed mothers.
- One-third of all teenage mothers have a second child before they are twenty.
- Pregnant teenagers, who do not have proper nutrition or antenatal care, experience increased incidence of severe anemia, pregnancy toxemia . . . cephalopelvic disproportion, and death.
- Babies born to teenagers fare less well than the offspring of mothers age 20 or older and have higher rates of mortality, low birth weights, congenital defects, mental and physical handicaps.
- Children of adolescents manifest more behavior problems.

What Can We Do?

A. Strategies for Promoting Chastity

B. Strategies for Promoting Awareness of the Privilege and Responsibility of Parenthood

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

Everyone should be persuaded that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men ("Gaudium et Spes," no. 51).

The assertion is made that a woman has a right not to be forced to bear a child against her will, but when a woman is already pregnant, this right must be considered in light of the child's right to life, the woman's responsibilities as its mother, and the rights and responsibilities of the child's father. The life of the unborn child is a human life. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 22, 1970)

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Lesson Three Overview

Abortion Is No Solution

Objective

The students will expand their understanding of the various methods being used to perform abortions.

Summary

In this lesson the students will examine in some detail the nature and effects of the present procedures used to perform abortions at various stages in the development of the baby. They will relate this information to the previous facts about the development of the baby that is taking place within the womb.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

An initial quiz, teacher input and discussion with the aid of a student handout on abortion methods, a review of data related to the present practice of abortion and group discussion

Evaluation

The content of the final group discussion will illustrate if the students have grasped the main ideas of this lesson. (Note: The teacher may wish to develop a formal quiz to be given at a later class, on the content contained in the Abortion Methods handout.)

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Meet the Abortion Providers (video)
Pro-Life Action League
6160 N. Cicero
Chicago, IL 60646

Abortion—How It Is (Part II)
(filmstrip)
Hayes Publishing
6304 Hamilton
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Dear Children (video)
Liguori Publications
One Liguori Drive
Liguori, MI 63057–9999

The Silent Scream (video)
Assignment Life (video)
A Matter of Choice (video)
(Short version of *Assignment Life*)
American Portrait Films
1695 W. Crescent, Suite 500
Anaheim, CA 92801

"Abortion In America" (pamphlet)
Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, VA 22090

"Life or Death" (pamphlet)
Hayes Publishing
6304 Hamilton
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Lesson Three

Teacher Background

Abortion Is No Solution

The main focus of this lesson is the presentation of facts regarding abortion. First, and most simply, abortion kills a human being, regardless of when or how the abortion is performed. It is in the light of that reality that you want to review with the students the various ways in which abortions are currently performed. While respecting the sensitivities of the age group, your students are probably old enough now to deal with the gruesome details of all abortion procedures, especially from the point of view of the developing baby who is killed. But because the facts are gruesome enough in themselves, present them in a rather clinical manner. Avoid too much expression of your own personal feelings, as legitimate as they may be. If the students were to become too caught up in your personal feelings, it might prevent them from coming to terms with their own feelings on the hard realities of abortion.

A second focus of this lesson is on explaining the potential personal risk every mother experiences if she has an abortion. The risks are real, and the harm which mothers actually experience physically, emotionally, and spiritually is much more common than abortion advocates are willing to admit. Most of the girls in your class are old enough to become pregnant and, therefore, could possibly be led to view abortion as a possible solution to an unwanted pregnancy. It is important to explain the reality and frequency of the harmful side effects which women risk if they have an abortion. Some of these side effects can remain with them the rest of their lives. It is also fair to observe that pro-abortion counsellors might be inclined to ignore or play down these facts.

For much the same reason, boys in the class, as potential fathers, need to understand the evil that abortion is, in addition to the risks to which they would be subjecting the mother of their child if they were to suggest or encourage abortion as a solution to an unwanted pregnancy. Too often husbands (or boyfriends) operate out of the mistaken assumption

that abortion is not really murder, and that, at least, it is no more complicated for the mother than going to a dentist. This kind of ignorance about the evil of abortion needs to be challenged.

In summary, abortion by its nature is never a good solution to an unwanted pregnancy. It is certainly not a solution for the baby who is killed by the mother, with or without the father's consent. In addition, it can also often create more serious and more long-lasting problems for the mother than carrying the child to term would have caused. Therefore, when the evil of abortion, and the gruesomeness of the physical process is properly known by the students, and when they fully recognize the serious side effects of abortion for the mother, it will be very difficult for them to consider abortion as an easy, humane, or effective solution to an unwanted pregnancy—whether their own or someone else's.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin the lesson by distributing Handout 3.1, "True or False." Ask students to complete the quiz.

• After sufficient time, go over quiz together, asking students to share their answers, one item at a time. Identify the correct answer when it is given. There is no need to comment on the items. These will be reviewed in depth later in the lesson. Answer key: 1–3 = true; 4 = false; 5 = true; 6 = false; 7 = true; 8–9 = false; 10 = true.

• Point out to the students that most people in the United States are vastly misinformed about abortion. Pass out Handout 3.2. Review with the students the statistics on the handout.

Present Main Ideas

• Distribute Handout 3.3, "Abortion Methods," and review it in depth with the students. Invite questions and discussion. In the process, it is good to briefly review the information from Lesson One regarding fetal development so the youth keep in mind that more than a "glob of cells" is being destroyed by these various methods.

To reinforce the information presented on the handout, it would be very effective to view one of the AVs suggested for this lesson and/or to provide one of the pamphlets suggested. These include graphic proof of what is involved in abortions.

Explore Further

• Distribute Handout 3.4, "Comment Sheet." Review this with the students.

• Conclude by observing these points:

1. Many of the reasons given to justify legalized abortion on demand (such as rape and incest, health risks to the mother, and so forth) are not supported by statistics. The statistics indicate that less than 8 percent of the 1.6 million abortions performed each

year are attributable to rape, incest, or health risk. (The "health risk" factor often involves anxieties. There is little evidence that if a child is aborted that the health chances of the mother are significantly improved.) Better than 92 percent are abortions of convenience.

2. The most common argument for justifying abortion continues to be the claim that the unborn child being aborted is not yet a human being. Refuting this claim remains a central issue in the pro-life movement.

Apply

• Pose this question to your class: Most abortion facilities do not show pictures of fetal development to the woman. If women seeking abortions were fully informed of the stage of development her baby has reached and were fully informed of precisely what was going to happen to that baby—and to herself—how many mothers do you think would actually go through with the abortion?

• Allow students to discuss this question in small groups for a short time. Then initiate a general class discussion, seeking to arrive at a consensus on the answer.

• Close lesson by inviting students to listen to a reading from Deuteronomy 30:15–16 and 19–20. Ask students to pray quietly, for a few moments, for all the mothers who may presently be considering an abortion. Invite spontaneous prayers of petition, to which the entire class responds, "Lord, hear our prayer." Conclude with this or a similar prayer:

> *O God and Author of life, forgive us for all the times we are ungrateful for the life You have bestowed on us. Forgive those who, in their ignorance, continue to promote abortion. Come to the aid of all those fathers and mothers who presently view abortion as a solution to the difficulties they face in becoming parents. We ask this in the name of Jesus who said, "Let the little children come to me." Amen.*

Optional Home Activity

- Invite students to share the opening quiz with their parent(s). Suggest that they read each statement and ask their parent(s) to give their True or False answer. Then students should share the Comment Sheet.

Handout 3.1 True-False Quiz

Instructions: Answer True or False to the following statements.

___ 1. Over 90 percent of all abortions can be classified as abortions for "social" reasons.

___ 2. Only 2 percent of all abortions performed involve "hard cases" like rape or incest.

___ 3. It is very rare for a woman to become pregnant when raped.

___ 4. Women who have abortions as teens seldom have difficulties with conception, or with pregnancy when they do want to have children.

___ 5. Approximately 190 abortions are performed every hour in the United States.

___ 6. Because abortions have been legalized, the risk of death or serious complications for the mother have been virtually eliminated.

___ 7. In some abortions the baby's skull has to be crushed so it can be removed from the mother's womb.

___ 8. Two million unborn babies have been killed by legal abortion since 1973 when the Supreme Court legalized abortion.

___ 9. Poor women and minority races have the greatest number of abortions now that abortion is legal and available. But the rate is higher among minorities proportionally.

___ 10. Most abortions are performed in the first trimester of pregnancy.

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Handout 3.2 Did You Know: Facts about Abortion

- Forty-seven percent of U.S. citizens think that less than 500,000 abortions are performed annually. The real number of abortions each year is **1.6 million.**

- U.S. citizens think that 21 percent of the abortions performed are for cases of rape or incest and that 16 percent are done because the mother's life is in danger. The fact is, **Less than 1 percent** of all the abortions performed are done as a result of incest and rape, and **only 7 percent** are done as the result of a "health problem" (and evidence supporting the need for abortion as a significant factor in improving the woman's health chances does not exist).

- A law requiring women to receive information about fetal development and alternatives to abortion before undergoing an abortion is favored by 86 percent of the population.

- Sixty percent of U.S. citizens think that every unborn child has a basic right to life.

(Source: A 1990 nationwide survey of 2,000 U.S. voters conducted by the Wirthlin Group for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and from studies done for the Alan Gutmacher Institute.)

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Handout 3.3 Abortion Methods

Definition: Abortion, as described in this handout, refers to the intentional removal of the developing baby from the mother's womb before the baby can live outside the womb, thereby killing the baby.

Methods during the First Three Months of the Baby's Life

1. *Suction Aspiration.* The mouth, or cervix, of the mother's womb is stretched open. An instrument called a suction curette, which is a hollow tube with a knife-like top, is inserted into the womb. Strong suction is used to tear the baby into pieces. The pieces are sucked from the mother's womb into a jar for disposal. This is the most popular method during the very early stages of pregnancy—up to six weeks.

2. *Dilatation and Curettage (also referred to as D and C).* The main difference between Dilatation and Curettage and suction aspiration is that, during a D and C, a loop-shaped steel knife is used to cut the baby away from the wall for the mother's womb and cut it into pieces. The pieces are then removed by suction into a jar or other container for disposal. This is the most used of all abortion methods, and will be used at any time during the first thirteen weeks of pregnancy.

3. *The Abortion Pill—RU-486.* RU-486 is an abortion inducing drug intended to destroy life. It is prescribed by a doctor and is taken with synthetic hormone injections. In France, where RU-486 was developed, a woman must go to a clinic to receive the drug and to take synthetic hormone injections, amounting to at least three visits to the clinic. Evidence exists to indicate that the drug is not perfectly safe. In light of the safety concerns, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has banned importation of RU-486 for personal use.

Methods after the Baby Is Three Months Old

1. *Dilatation and Evacuation.* After the mouth of the womb has been sufficiently stretched open, specially designed tools are inserted which dismember the baby's body and crush its skull. The body pieces are then removed by using ring forceps (a special kind of surgical pliers). There is no nice way to describe this method.

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The baby is literally crushed and sliced into small pieces and removed with tweezers. There is strong evidence the baby experiences pain and attempts to escape the abortionist's tools during this kind of abortion. Because of the baby's advanced development, this method is not used after the baby has reached four and a half months of age.

2. *Saline Injection.* For babies older than four and a half months, a salt solution is injected into the sac where the baby lives inside the mother's womb. The baby inhales and swallows this poisonous solution. It causes the baby to experience convulsions and internal hemorrhaging. The baby usually dies after about two hours but some have been known to remain alive much longer. In other words, the baby's death is a slow process. The mother then goes into labor and delivers a dead (or dying) baby within twenty-four to forty-eight hours after the injection.

Effects on the Mother Who Has an Abortion

The mother who has an abortion risks experiencing the following physical and emotional harm as a result of the abortion:

1. *Hemorrhaging.* This can lead to death if appropriate medical assistance is not provided. Many abortion clinics are not equipped to treat hemorrhaging.

2. *Infections affecting the womb and other reproductive organs.* Since abortion is a surgical procedure all the risks of infection associated with surgery are present.

3. *Damage to the cervix or mouth of the womb.* The instruments used must unnaturally stretch the cervix to have access to the baby. This may increase later risk of miscarriage or premature birth.

4. *Perforation of the womb.* The tools inserted into the womb to destroy the baby are very sharp and always pose some degree of danger to the mother.

5. *Perforation of the bowel.* The reason is the same as is #4.

6. *Complications during pregnancy and/or the inability to have a healthy baby in subsequent pregnancies.* Many women who have had abortions experience such problems.

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7. *Post-Abortion Syndrome.* Various forms of emotional trauma that require professional counselling—such as guilt, depression, anger, sleep disorder, recurring nightmares, grief, and suicidal tendencies. This is much more common that the promoters of abortion are often willing to admit. Some of the woman's most basic natural instincts seem to be contradicted by the experience of an abortion.

In summary, an abortion does not just destroy the baby. It often can do serious harm to the mother, a fact the supporters of abortion seldom discuss.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

Abortion is and has always been considered a serious violation of God's law. Those who obtain an abortion, those who persuade others to have an abortion, and those who perform the abortion procedures are guilty of breaking God's law. Moreover, in order to emphasize the special evil of abortion, under Church law, those who undergo or perform an abortion place themselves in a state of excommunication. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 7)

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Handout 3.4 Comment Sheet

1. Over 90 percent of all abortions can be classified as abortions for "social" reasons.

True. Following the Supreme Court decision of January, 1973 (*Roe v. Wade; Doe v. Bolton)* an expanded legal definition of "health" was allowed. "Health" can range from wanting to avoid embarrassment to not wanting to interrupt one's career, to claims of financial hardship, to not wanting to have to care for a child who will have physical or mental disabilities. It is even legally possible to obtain an abortion simply because the sex of the unborn baby is not what the parents wanted.

2. Only 1 percent of all abortions performed involve "hard cases" like rape or incest.

True. This is only rarely the reason a mother seeks an abortion. It is even more rare today that pregnancy threatens the mother's life.

3. It is very rare for a woman to become pregnant when raped.

True. For many reasons, including extreme emotional trauma, sexual dysfunction, and non-fertility, incidences of pregnancy resulting from rape are extremely rare.

4. Women who have abortions as teens seldom have difficulties with conception, or with pregnancy when they do want to have children.

False. Studies show that women who have had abortions often have difficulty during consequent pregnancies. They experience higher-than-average miscarriages. Their babies tend to be born underweight and premature. Tubular pregnancies tend to be much more common.

5. Approximately 190 abortions are performed every hour in the United States.

True. Actually about 4,000 abortions are performed during each 24-hour period in the United States, or 1.6 million each year.

6. Because abortions have been legalized, the risk of death or serious complications for the mother have been virtually eliminated.

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False. Many women are suffering serious complications, and the incidence of actual death as a result of an abortion is probably only slightly lower than when abortions were performed illegally. Most abortion clinics—where the majority of abortions are performed today—do not have adequate emergency facilities for treating mothers who do experience injury and/or hemorrhaging during the abortion. In addition, there are the long-range emotional injuries the mother still experiences even if the abortion is legal.

7. In some abortions the baby's skull has to be crushed so it can be removed from the mother's womb.

True. This is necessary after the baby has reached three months or older. By then, the baby is clearly able to experience pain.

8. Two million unborn babies have been killed by legal abortion since 1973 when the Supreme Court legalized abortion.

False. The number is actually 25 million, each one a human person who was never given the chance to live and experience life.

9. Poor women and minority races have the greatest number of abortions now that abortion is legal and available.

False. Sixty-six and four-tenths percent of those receiving abortions are from white, middle-class families.

10. Almost 50 percent of abortions are performed between the 8th and 20th weeks of pregnancy.

True. Given what we now know about the baby's development in the womb, after eight weeks the baby can hardly be considered a meaningless "glob of cells." It is already highly recognizable as a human being by the 8th week.

The Catholic Church Teaches . . .

The assertion is made that a woman has a right not to be forced to bear a child against her will, but when a woman is already pregnant, this right must be considered in light of the child's right to life, the woman's responsibilities as its mother, and the rights and responsibilities of the child's father. The life of the unborn child is a human life. The destruction of any human life is not a private matter, but the concern of every responsible citizen. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 22, 1970)

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Lesson Four
Overview

Abortion and the Supreme Court

Objective

Students will become familiar with the Supreme Court decisions affecting abortion and related legal issues.

Summary

In this lesson, students will review the evolution of the legalization of abortion in our country. In the process, they will identify the inconsistencies in this legislation and also identify ways in which the present law might be changed.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

It will also be necessary for you as teacher to become familiar with the present and pending legislation regarding abortion in your state. Option: Invite a local pro-life advocate to speak to the class on current state legislative activities related to abortion.

Procedure

Introductory worksheet, review and discussion of handout on the Supreme Court ruling related to abortion, input and discussion on what is taking place in the students' own state legislature regarding abortion

Evaluation

Student discussion and suggestions regarding possible actions they can take will indicate the grasp they gain of the subject.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Conceived in Liberty (film)
American Portrait Films
1695 W. Crescent
Suite 500
Anaheim, CA 92801

"The Supreme Court Has Ruled It's Legal to Kill a Baby" (pamphlet)
Hayes Publishing
6304 Hamilton
Cincinnati, OH 45224

Lesson Four

Teacher Background

Abortion and the Supreme Court

In this lesson, the goal is to help the students understand the evolution and present status of the law regarding abortion in our country. The students are too young to remember a time when abortion was illegal in our country; consequently, they tend to think that the present laws are part of the very nature of our Constitution. This is not the case. Legalized abortion on demand as the "law of the land" is relatively new. It is also founded on several highly controversial interpretations of our Constitution—specifically, the interpretation of a person's right to privacy; the interpretation of the legal status of the unborn child; and the interpretation of "health" as regards the pregnant woman.

Inconsistencies in these interpretations abound. For example, a sixteen-year-old girl is protected by her right to privacy to have an abortion without parental consent but the same girl needs her parents' consent to have a tooth pulled or to have her tonsils removed! Again, for example, it is unconstitutional to prevent a sixteen-year-old girl from aborting a baby from her body, but is constitutional to prevent her from ingesting alcohol into that same body! And again, for example, the six-month-old baby within the womb is not a "legal person," but that same baby, from conception onward, can be considered a "legal heir."

As you present this lesson, it is important to point out these inconsistencies in order to demonstrate that the Supreme Court rulings on abortion do not rest on solid constitutional grounds. The present interpretations are quite arbitrary in many respects and tend to contradict the common sense of even a young child!

Since the Webster decision in 1989, the Supreme Court has attempted to shift the debate back to the individual states. This has created even more confusion and division throughout the country. Attempts to pass more legislation protective of the unborn now allowed by the Webster decision have been met with well-organized resistance by abortion advocates.

It seems that the ultimate solution rests with a constitutional amendment which recognizes the legal status of the child from conception. However, it remains possible for the Supreme Court to reverse *Roe v. Wade* and related decisions as it is forced to rule on some of the new legislation that is being passed by some states.

In any event, abortion is both a moral issue and a hotly debated legal issue in our country. As pro-life advocates, we must be willing to enter this debate and fight the battle in the legislatures and in the courts. This is the main point you will want to impress upon your students.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin lesson by distributing Handout 4.1, "You Be the Judge." Instruct students to complete the worksheet.

• After students have completed the worksheet, ask them to share their answers.

• Now give the correct answers. They are as follows:

1. No
2. No
3. No
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. Yes

• Observe that, according to present Supreme Court rulings, it is constitutionally illegal for a mother to kill her baby once it is born but, even up to one day before birth, it is constitutionally *legal* to kill the same baby by means of an abortion! Ask students to share their comments and reactions to that fact.

• Point out how, on the contrary, the Bishops of the United States teach that human life is sacred and that God gives people the privilege and responsibility of protecting life. Note that the Church teaches that ". . . whatever is opposed to life itself, such as any type of murder, genocide, abortion, euthanasia, or wilful self-destruction, whatever violates the integrity of the human person . . . all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society. . . . Moreover, they are a supreme dishonor to the Creator" (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, no. 27).

• Pass out Handout 4.2, which summarizes the Church's teachings on the right to life of unborn children. Review the handout with the students.

Present Main Ideas

• Now distribute Handout 4.3, "Abortion and the Supreme Court." Allow students a few minutes to read it.

• Go over each item. Invite students to ask questions. Make necessary clarifications.

• Observe the following points regarding the present implications of the Supreme Court rulings:

1. The entire basis of the Supreme Court rulings depends on how one interprets our constitutional right to privacy. Being pregnant and deciding how to deal with one's pregnancy is considered a private affair affecting only the mother. The spouse (father) has no say in the matter; neither do the parents in the case of a pregnant minor; nor does the human being most affected by the decision—the unborn child. The Church teaches that the "right to life" is the foundational human right. All other rights are subordinate to it.

2. The baby is not regarded as a "legal person" and consequently, is not protected by the Constitution until he or she is judged "viable," that is, capable of living outside the womb. But the Court does not attempt to determine when that might be! If only one doctor decides that the baby is not "viable," that provides legal justification for aborting it. The Court would better start with the questions, Is the conceptus living and human? Is the conceptus a distinct living human being?

The framework underlying the concept of "person" is the human being. It is discriminatory to exclude some classes of human beings from personhood in order to deny them their rights as human beings.

3. The health of the mother is viewed in the broadest possible sense so that even a simple unhappiness can be viewed as a danger to the mother's health.

4. Consequently, according to the present status of the Supreme Court rulings, it is still constitutionally legal for states to allow an abortion on demand up to the time of birth.

5. However, because of the recent Webster ruling, states now have the authority to regulate abortion within certain limits.

6. Finally, to ensure that all unborn babies in the United States are protected—from conception onward—by the rights contained in our Constitution, a Constitutional amendment is required.

- Now invite students to express their own attitudes regarding the fairness of the present Supreme Court rulings.

Explore Further

- Explain that we presently have two approaches we can take in our efforts to oppose legalized abortion as it now exists in our country. First, we can attempt to enact protective legislation passed at the state level. Second, we can attempt to get a Constitutional amendment passed which would affect all states.

- Invite students to identify the pros and cons of each approach. List these on the board as they are stated.

- Encourage debate by asking this question: Which do you feel is the better approach at this point in time? Why? Proceed with the debate until everyone has had an opportunity to express an opinion. (Note: It is not necessary to seek consensus in this matter. Both options are good and need not be mutually exclusive.)

Apply

- Share with the students the present status of abortion legislation in your own state by providing information on these questions:

—Have any restrictions on abortion been passed (such as parental consent required by minors)?

—Is any legislation presently being debated?

—Is there a strong pro-life lobby in your state? A strong pro-abortion lobby?

- Depending on the present status of abortion legislation in your state, discuss with students how they might personally become involved. Attempt to come up with practical actions they might take, in keeping with your local situation.

Option: If possible, invite a local pro-life advocate to share with your students the present situation in your state and the organized efforts currently in progress to affect state legislation.

- Conclude session by asking students to pause for a moment of prayer. Begin with a reading of Romans 6:15–19. Pause for quiet reflection. Invite students to offer prayers of petition, using the response, "Lord, hear our prayer." Summarize with the following or a similar prayer:

> *O God, You wish that all Your children have fullness of life, including those just beginning their life within their mother's womb. Enlighten and empower us who are young and strong to devote our intelligence and our energy to help protect our unborn brothers and sisters. Give our country and our country's leaders the wisdom to repeal all unjust laws and to protect the rights of all our citizens, especially our unborn children. Amen.*

Optional Home Activities

- Invite students to share Handouts 4.2 and 4.3 with their parents as a way to help parents review the abortion issue.

- Ask students to encourage their parents to become active in supporting the legislative efforts of pro-life advocates in your state.

Handout 4.1 You Be the Judge

Instructions: Read the two cases below and then answer the questions.

Case One

A mother smothers her one-day-old baby. Her lawyer pleads "not guilty," using the arguments listed below. Mark each argument which you think is a legal justification for her action with a YES. Mark each argument which you think is not a legal justification with a NO.

_____ 1. Killing the baby was a private matter since the baby was basically an extension of her own body.

_____ 2. The baby was not yet a legal person and had no rights.

_____ 3. The baby was a threat to the mother's mental and emotional health.

_____ 4. The baby could not survive on its own.

Case Two

If the same mother had aborted and consequently killed her baby the day before its birth instead of the day after its birth and had used the same arguments to defend her action, would any of them be accepted by law? Mark each argument which you think is a legal justification for her action with a YES. Mark each argument which you think is not a legal justification with a NO.

_____ 1. Killing the baby was a private matter since the baby was basically an extension of her own body.

_____ 2. The baby was not yet a legal person and had no rights.

_____ 3. The baby was a threat to the mother's mental and emotional health.

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Handout 4.2 In Summary: The Church's Teachings on Unborn Children and the Right to Life

We honor God when we reverence human life. When human life is served, man is enriched and God is acknowledged. When human life is threatened, man is diminished and God is less manifest in our midst. ("Human Life in Our Day," no. 5)

Everyone should be persuaded that human life and the task of transmitting it are not realities bound up with this world alone. Hence they cannot be measured or perceived only in terms of it, but always have a bearing on the eternal destiny of men ("Gaudium et Spes," no. 51).

Let society always be on the side of life. Let it never dictate, directly or indirectly, recourse to the prevention of life or to its destruction in any of its phases. . . . ("Human Life in Our Day," no. 83)

. . . . Society has an obligation to safeguard the life of every person from the very beginning of that life, and to perfect a legal-political system that assures protection to the individual and the well-being of the community. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 17, 1969)

. . . Human life is a precious gift from God. . . . Recognition of the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, lies at the very heart of our individual and social duty to respect human life. ("Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities," no. 2)

. . . No society can live in peace with itself, or with the world, without a full awareness of the worth and dignity of every human life (Jas 4:1–2). When we accept violence in any form as commonplace, our sensitivities become dulled. When we accept violence, war itself can be taken for granted.

Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity. Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous indignation at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war? ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)

Catholic teaching holds that, regardless of the circumstances of its origin, human life is valuable from conception to death because God is the Creator of each human being, and because mankind has been redeemed by Jesus Christ. ("Pastoral Message on Abortion," no. 4)

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Handout 4.3 Abortion and the Supreme Court

Background

1. From the mid 1800s until 1967, abortion was outlawed and considered a criminal offense in every state.

2. In 1967, Colorado became the first state to legalize abortion, but it allowed abortion in only certain limited circumstances.

3. In 1970, New York passed the first "abortion on demand" law, allowing abortion up to the first twenty-four weeks of pregnancy.

4. Between 1970 and 1973, sixteen states passed laws legalizing abortions in certain circumstances. Thirty-three other state legislatures debated the issue and voted not to legalize abortion in their states.

Supreme Court Rulings

1. In 1973, the Supreme Court made two rulings on abortion in the cases known as *Roe v. Wade* and *Doe v. Bolton.* In these decisions, the Court ruled that it was unconstitutional for any state to outlaw abortions, basing its decisions on these principles it claimed were contained in the Constitution:

a. A woman's right to privacy extends to her own body, therefore, she has a right to decide how to deal with a pregnancy.

b. An unborn child is not a "legal person," and, therefore, is not protected by the Constitution. An unborn child becomes a "legal person" when it is viable (able to live outside the womb).

c. A woman has a right to health, and, if the pregnancy endangers her health, she has a right to an abortion.

2. In further rulings, the Court made further clarifications:

a. While it is generally agreed in the medical community that the baby is viable by the sixth month of pregnancy, any licensed medical doctor can decide whether or not the baby is, in fact, viable. (No other guidelines were provided by the Court.)

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b. The "health" of the mother includes not just physical health, but possible mental, psychological, and familial concerns, and her age. (Thus, sociological and even economic issues could be interpreted as "health" issues.)

c. The mother's right to privacy excludes the father of the child who is prohibited from interfering with the decision to abort; likewise, in the case of a pregnant minor, the parents of that minor may not interfere with her decision to abort.

3. As a result of these rulings and interpretations, it was virtually possible for a woman to obtain an abortion "on demand" right up to the time of the birth of the child, because the requirements needed to justify an abortion had become so wide-ranging.

4. Between 1973 and 1989, numerous attempts by states to pass legislation restricting abortion were struck down by the Supreme Court, using the above guidelines.

5. However, in 1989, in *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services,* the Supreme Court did reverse itself to some degree by granting the States more legislative control on regulating the practice of abortion in their own states. Two things are important to note in this ruling:

a. It did *not* reverse in principle the key issues of the woman's right to privacy regarding abortion, nor the issue of the unborn child's legal status, or right to life until deemed "viable."

b. Each law which a state does pass is still subject to review by the Supreme Court.

6. Four courses of legal action to protect unborn children are now possible:

a. attempt to influence state legislatures to pass laws that at least limit the conditions regarding when and how a woman can abort.

b. attempt to get a Constitutional amendment passed which would recognize the legal status of the child from conception onward.

c. attempt to influence the Supreme Court to reverse its *Roe v. Wade* decision when it reviews new laws that restrict abortion and offer protection to the unborn that some of the states are passing. (Incidentally, the Supreme Court has reversed its own decisions over one hundred times throughout its history, so this is possible.)

d. attempt to pass laws that will provide real help for low-income women who might otherwise feel pressured into abortion.

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Lesson Five
Overview

Abortion and Human Rights

Objective

The students will become familiar with the issues and arguments in the current debate between pro-abortion and pro-life advocates.

Summary

In this lesson the students will review the pro-abortion arguments used to defend a woman's right to an abortion and will see how these arguments either ignore of deny the more fundamental question of the baby's right to life. The rights of the father are discussed in this context also.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible

Procedure

Class discussion, teacher input, group worksheet activity, the formulation of a letter challenging the legality of the pro-abortion position

Evaluation

The letters developed by the student groups will illustrate if they have understood the pro-life position on this issue.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Conceived in Liberty (video)
American Portrait Films
1695 W. Crescent
Suite 500
Anaheim, CA 92801

"The War Against the Unborn" (pamphlet)
Concerned Women for America
379 L'Enfant Promenade, SW
Suite 800
Washington, DC 20024

"We Are the People Who Believe in Life"
Catholic Update Reprints
St. Anthony Messenger
1615 Republic
Cincinnati, OH 45210

"For Men Only" (pamphlet)
Easton Publishing
PO Box 1064
Jefferson City, MO 65105

"Language of Illusion" (pamphlet)
Life Cycle Books
PO Box 792
Lewiston, NY 14092–0792

No Alibis (video)
Teens and Abortion (video)
B.A.M. Distributors
PO Box 3207
Reston, VA 22090

Lesson Five

Teacher Background

Abortion and Human Rights

In this lesson the focus is on the issue of the legality of abortion in the context of human rights. Currently, abortion advocates have attempted to defend the practice of abortion in terms of a pregnant woman's right over the choices that affect her own body and her own life. Abortion advocates claim that the government interferes with a woman's rights if it attempts to outlaw the practice of abortion. This "pro-choice" approach has a powerful emotional appeal in our democratic society because of our commitment to personal freedom. To oppose abortion can therefore seem un-American and unpatriotic.

Somehow the rights of the child get ignored by the "pro-choice" approach. The killing of the child becomes the means by which other persons achieve their ends. Pro-choice must be seen for what it is: a choice to kill.

That's why it is important to help students recognize the inconsistencies in the pro-choice approach of abortion advocates. On a purely legal level, governments can, in fact, limit our right to make certain personal choices in order to protect *the common good.* Governments outlaw not just the importation and sale but also the personal use of certain drugs like cocaine. No reasonable citizen complains that the government is interfering with our basic human rights or our personal freedom when that government makes cocaine use illegal, and punishable by fine and imprisonment. In the same way, laws exist which outlaw the use of excessive physical or emotional punishment by parents in disciplining their children. Again, no one complains that the basic rights or freedom of the parents to decide how to raise their children are taken away by such laws. Indeed, when environmental laws designed to protect lakes, rivers, trees, and endangered species are enacted many people applaud the wisdom of the laws, even though the laws limit individuals' or corporations' freedom.

Help students see that many laws do limit our right to make certain personal choices when the personal choice conflicts with the common good or the rights of others. It is important that you help students realize

that many laws do limit our right to make certain personal choices but nevertheless do not restrict our basic freedom or rights as human beings. Moreover, the rights of the unborn must be considered. Society has a responsibility to protect the unborn through its laws and social policies.

On the moral or ethical level every person has the same basic rights—to life, freedom, dignity, education, food, medical help, and so forth. It is always immoral to pursue our own rights if doing so means we ignore or take away the rights of others. The immorality of slavery is rooted in that principle. A fundamental duty of governments has always been to ensure that those least able to defend their own rights and freedoms—small children, the mentally and physically disabled, the feeble elderly—are protected.

Recognition of the right to life of the unborn is at the center of the fallacy contained in the "pro-choice" defense of abortion. In defending the mother's rights to make choices over her own body and life, pro-abortion advocates totally ignore the rights of the most defenseless of all human beings, the unborn child developing in the mother's womb. This point cannot be stressed too much with your students. A defense of abortion based on a woman's rights while totally ignoring the rights of the baby is blatantly unfair and inconsistent. The "pro-choice" argument which, on the surface, seems to be about fairness and personal rights, is, in fact, very one-sided and totally unfair once you shift the argument's focus to the unborn child.

In reality, given the nature and effect of abortion—namely, the killing of a defenseless human being—governments have not only the legitimate authority but also the moral obligation to outlaw abortions. Such laws would not be an infringement on a pregnant woman's rights since no person in a civilized society has the right to kill another person.

In presenting these facts to the students be careful to respect and listen to any questions or objections they might raise. In our society the "pro-choice" argument of abortion advocates has a strong emotional appeal, especially to youth who are at a stage of personal development where they tend to be very sensitive about personal rights and freedoms. To many, the "pro-choice" defense of abortion will "feel right." That is why you will need to be patient and help the students move beyond these initial feelings to

review the issue in more depth and with more precision. Young people are quite capable of recognizing both the legal and moral inconsistencies of the "pro-choice" defense of abortion once these inconsistencies are pointed out to them.

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin lesson by asking students to share what they understand about the pro-choice position of abortion advocates. Initiate discussion with this or a similar introduction: "A powerful, well-organized movement, called the Pro-Choice movement, opposes any attempts to restrict the present laws that allow abortion on demand. The Pro-Choice movement maintains that it is defending a woman's constitutional rights. What do you know about this movement and the arguments it uses to defend legalized abortion?"

• As students respond, list on the board their key observations. When the list is complete, ask the students to critique the arguments of those who support legalized abortion.

Present Main Ideas

• Based on the students' observations, and any others you may have added, summarize the key points in the "pro-choice" argument:

1. Women have a right to decide how to treat their own bodies, especially when this affects their physical and emotional health and their economic status.
2. The decision to have an abortion is a private decision and should not be regulated by public laws.
3. Finally, pro-choice advocates maintain that it violates a woman's rights to force her to have an unwanted child if this is going to cause her economic difficulties or if the child is seriously disabled.

• Proceed to observe the key inconsistencies in these positions, adding other ideas and examples of your own:

1. Abortion is not a private decision, affecting only the woman. The baby's life and the baby's rights are also involved, as are the rights of the father of the child. In moral terms, direct abortion is a moral species of murder, a decision to kill another human being.
2. It is the duty of any government to protect the lives of all its citizens, especially those least able to defend themselves. There are already many laws which limit personal free choices for the sake of the

common good. (Pornography laws, child-abuse laws, drug laws, pollution and littering laws, even traffic laws—all limit our personal free choices to some degree.)

3. Alternatives to abortion are available, such as adoption. It is not necessary to kill the baby because one is too poor to support the child, for example. (Moreover, in fact, it is not the poor but the middle-class who have the most abortions.) Adoption is an alternative which respects the baby's right to life.

• In the presentation, it is important to stress that the most fundamental of all human rights is the right to life. Abortion, by its nature, ignores this right to life. Thus, to defend abortion on the grounds that prohibiting it denies a woman her constitutional rights is inconsistent and one-sided. Any law that gives people the legal right to kill defenseless, innocent, unborn babies can hardly be defended on the grounds that it is necessary to protect a woman's constitutional rights over her own body and her own life. While we are free to choose what we are to do, we are not free to make what we choose to do *to be* good or bad, right or wrong. Direct abortion is a moral species of murder. It is immoral, and no legal right can make it moral.

• Remind the students of the Church's teaching in this regard:

> *The assertion is made that a woman has a right not to be forced to bear a child against her will, but when a woman is already pregnant, this right must be considered in light of the child's right to life, the woman's responsibilities as its mother, and the rights and responsibilities of the child's father. The life of the unborn child is a human life. The destruction of any human life is not a private matter, but the concern of every responsible citizen. ("Statement on Abortion," no. 5, April 22, 1970)*

• Finally, explore with the students the dangerous precedent the pro-abortion argument establishes. If the argument is accepted (and it has been) that mothers have the right to kill their unborn babies, can the same argument eventually be used to defend the

killing of the feeble elderly, persons who are mentally disabled, or any other group? Yes—because the fact is, once the right to life can be legally denied to one group, it can be legally denied to **any** unwanted groups. That could most definitely happen.

- Again, remind the students of Church teaching:

> *Violence has many faces: oppression of the poor, deprivation of basic human rights, economic exploitation, sexual exploitation and pornography, neglect or abuse of the aged and the helpless, and innumerable other acts of inhumanity. Abortion in particular blunts a sense of the sacredness of human life. In a society where the innocent unborn are killed wantonly, how can we expect people to feel righteous indignation at the act or threat of killing noncombatants in war? ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response: A Pastoral Letter on War and Peace," no. 284)*

Explore Further

- Distribute Handout 5.1, "Slavery and Abortion." Invite students to complete the worksheet.

- After sufficient time, invite students to share their work. Discuss together their answers to the Summary question on the worksheet.

Apply

- Form students into small groups. Distribute Handout 5.2, "Letter Opposing Pro-Abortion Arguments." Instruct groups to draft a letter as described in the handout.

- Groups share their letter with the class when it is completed. Class gives additional suggestions on how the letters might be improved.

- Instruct groups to appoint an editor who is to write a final draft to be mailed. The finished draft is to be presented to group, at the next class, for everyone to sign.

• Now invite students to pause and reflect quietly a moment. Ask a student to read Romans 8:15–17. Close by reciting the Serenity Prayer. (You may wish to provide students with a copy of it.)

O God, give me the grace to accept the things
I cannot change,
The courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

Optional Home Activity

• Invite students to ask their parents the same question that was asked them at the beginning of the lesson regarding their understanding of the pro-choice argument of the Pro-Abortion movement. Students should then share with parents what they have learned from this class about the errors in this Pro-Choice approach.

Handout 5.1 Slavery and Abortion

Instructions: Listed are some of the legal conditions and arguments that were used to defend the right of slave owners to have slaves. They describe what was experienced by slaves at the time of the Supreme Court's *Dred Scott* decision in 1857. Below each item describe the similar legal conditions of the unborn as a result of the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, or the similar arguments used by abortion advocates to defend the right to abortion.

I. The slave is not a legal person and hence has no legal rights under the U.S. Constitution, even if he or she has a heart and brain and is a living human being in the biological sense.

What is the unborn baby's legal status under *Roe v. Wade?*

II. The slave becomes a legal person only if he or she is officially set free by the owner.

What is the unborn baby's status in this regard?

III. Until such time as the slave is set free the slave has no legal rights. The owner has the legal right to treat the slave in any manner the owner wishes, including the killing of the slave. It violates the slave owners' rights to pass laws which would limit their ability to treat their slaves any way they wish.

How is this similar to present abortion laws and the pro-choice approach to abortion?

IV. Owning slaves is a free choice, as well as a constitutional right. If you don't like it no one is forcing you to own slaves. Just don't force your morality on others.

What are abortion advocates saying today in this regard?

V. Actually, slavery is merciful. Slaves are protected and cared for as slaves. They would suffer greatly if set free since they are ill-equipped to survive in the free.

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How is this similar to present pro-choice arguments for abortion?

Summary Question: Slavery is now outlawed in the United States and throughout almost the entire world and no one complains that human rights have been violated thereby. Is abortion the last form of legalized slavery in our country and should it therefore be abolished by constitutional amendment if necessary?

Be prepared to explain your answer.

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Handout 5.2 Letter Opposing Pro-Abortion Arguments

Instructions: Your group is to compose a letter opposing the pro-abortion arguments. First, decide if you want to write the letter to the editor of your local paper or to your Senators and Representative in Congress. After you've decided, discuss together the key points you want to make in the letter. Finally, compose a first draft of the letter to be shared with the class.
It should be no longer than 300 words.

1. Person(s) to whom you will send the letter: _____
2. Key ideas:

3. First draft:

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Lesson Six
Overview

The Church—Community of Concern

Objective

The students will recognize that the Church's pro-life movement is rooted in a consistent ethic of life, which includes the responsibility to value and reverence the life-giving power of sexuality and to assist those who experience problem pregnancies.

Summary

In this lesson, the students will examine the Church's "consistent ethic of life" approach, the relationship of that ethic to respect for sexual powers, and the various ways the Church and pro-life organizations work to assist parents in need, both during pregnancy and after the child's birth. An overview of the various national pro-life organizations is presented.

Time

45–60 minutes

Teacher Preparation/Materials

Student handouts, a Bible, closing prayer service

Procedure

Initial brainstorming activity, teacher input, review of handout on pro-life organizations and activities, small group worksheet activity, identification of a class project, and final worksheet

Evaluation

The results of the final activity and final worksheet will illustrate if the students have formed an understanding of the main points of the lesson and of the course.

Resources for Lesson or Enrichment

Emergency Pregnancy Services Presentation (video)
Emergency Pregnancy Service
5001 Leavenworth
Omaha, NE 68106

Mother Tiger, Mother Tiger (film/video)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

A Day in the Life of Bonnie Consolo (film)
Barr Films
3490 East Foothill Blvd.
Pasadena, CA 91107

Pastoral Plan for Pro-Life Activities: A Reaffirmation (booklet)
National Conference of Catholic Bishops
3211 Fourth St., NE
Washington, DC 20017

You Can Make a Difference (video)
Franciscan Communications
1229 South Santee
Los Angeles, CA 90015

"Abortion in America" (pamphlet)
Intercessors for America
PO Box 2639
Reston, VA 22090

Option for the Poor (film/video)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Eye of the Camel (film)
Paulist Productions
PO Box 1057
Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Lesson Six

Teacher Background

The Church—Community of Concern

The purpose of this final lesson is to help students situate the pro-life movement within the larger context of the Church's commitment to a consistent ethic of life. Too often the pro-life movement is inaccurately perceived as a "single issue" movement, but such is not the Church's position.

The lesson will also affirm that chastity, which is rooted in a respect for sexuality and its life-giving purpose, is essential to a consistent life ethic. Those who truly value life value their sexuality and its life-giving power. They recognize the need for chastity, which they practice and promote.

The Church makes it clear that it is not enough to oppose abortion and practice chastity. We have an obligation in justice, and as disciples of the compassionate Jesus, to strive to also assist parents who are experiencing problems both during and after pregnancy. It is not enough to simply tell a young mother to carry the baby to term. We are also obligated to help them during and after their pregnancy to deal with whatever problems the birth of a child may entail—physically, emotionally, and financially.

Moreover, while it is fair to say that there is an urgency involved in the struggle against abortion, this urgency does not mean that we can, therefore, ignore other forms of social injustice. There is an interconnectedness that binds all human rights issues together. Note, however, that it is the "right to life" which is the fundamental and foundational right, the condition upon which all other rights are based. "Hence, it must be protected above all others" ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

The bishops' teachings as expressed in the concept of a consistent life ethic is the necessary setting for understanding the pro-life (anti-abortion) movement. If the pro-life movement were to be pursued in isolation from this larger understanding of the Church's commitment to protecting the rights and dignity of all persons, it would risk losing both its credibility and its effectiveness.

In this context, you can introduce and explain to the students the many national and local organizations that have been established by the Church and other religious groups for just that purpose. The Church seeks to promote adoption as a viable alternative to abortion, especially for young, unmarried mothers. Given the fact that some studies indicate that as many as 2 million couples are now eager to adopt, this is probably the most humane of all solutions for these young girls. The Church seeks to provide practical assistance, such as free medical care, to the expectant mother and child. It seeks to help the mother obtain financial aid. It seeks to provide placement and care for severely handicapped babies. The Church seeks also to provide counseling and emotional support.

In the context of this lesson, you may want to consider inviting persons who work in adoption agencies or who are engaged in counseling women and girls with problem pregnancies. The real-life success stories and tragedies that such people can share will help the students translate the theory contained in this lesson to a more tangible and practical level.

In this final lesson, you will want to invite the youth to join with the rest of the Church in supporting the Pro-Life movement, as a way of showing their commitment to protecting the rights of all people. Point out to them that once a society "legally" discriminates against one group—such as the unborn—that society sets a dangerous precedent that can lead to the gradual erosion of the rights of other groups. The Church is a pro-life Church, that is, a Church committed to protecting the rights and dignity of all persons, regardless of sex, age, race, religion, socio-economic status, or mental or physical disability.

As the bishops of the United States have written:

> *We honor God when we reverence human life. When human life is served, man is enriched and God is acknowledged. When human life is threatened, man is diminished and God is less manifest in our midst. ("Human Life in Our Day," no. 5)*

Teaching Procedure

Introduce Lesson

• Begin lesson by asking students to identify what they consider to be the inalienable rights every human being has by virtue of being a human being and a child of God. List these on the board.

• Comment and expand on these as necessary. The final list might include the following, though they can be stated in various ways: the right to life, adequate medical care, adequate food, clothing, and shelter; the right to education, work, personal property, privacy, freedom of speech, religion, a fair trial, and a voice in how one is governed; the right to be treated with dignity and equality regardless of sex, race, religion, age, physical or mental disability, or socio-economic status.

Point out to the students that the right to life is foundational for all the other rights. It is the condition underlying all the others.

• Then ask students to identify all the reasons mothers (or the fathers) might give for considering a pregnancy a problem pregnancy, which could tempt them into viewing abortion as a possible solution to their problem. List these on the board as they are given, next to the list of human rights.

• After the list is complete, ask students to categorize each example as either a serious problem (for example, the baby will be born with serious birth defects) or a superficial problem (for example, the mother fears losing her figure). After all agree that a particular problem is superficial, erase it from the list.

Present Main Ideas

• Proceed to explain the concept of the consistent life ethic espoused by the Church. Begin by pointing out that the Church teaches that the right to life of all human beings, from conception onward, is the *fundamental* and *foundational* right. It is the condition out of which all other rights emerge ("Declaration on Abortion," no. 11, November 18, 1974).

• Next, stress that the Church is committed to protecting and promoting the rights and dignity of human beings, and that all the human rights of all human beings are intertwined. You cannot ignore one of our human rights, or the rights of a particular group of people, without eventually threatening *all* our rights and the rights of *all* people. Consequently, to be consistent in our efforts to promote human rights for the unborn, for example, we cannot ignore or consider unimportant other kinds of human rights violations or other groups of people who are also being deprived of their rights by racism, classism, sexism, religious persecution, poverty, violence, and war.

• Explain that the pro-life struggle needs to be situated within this larger struggle to promote and protect the rights and dignity of all people. However, because abortion is literally a life-death issue in which babies are being killed every day, it deserves the high priority in our efforts to promote the human rights of all people. It is the fundamental human rights issue.

Moreover, note that one way of promoting the pro-life position is to promote chastity. Fifty percent of all abortions are sought by young unwed women. Such abortions could be eliminated by the practice of chastity. Those who truly value life value sexuality and its life-giving power. They show their reverence for life by promoting and practicing chastity. It is the best alternative to abortion prior to pregnancy.

• Observe, moreover, that pro-life groups throughout the country are trying to provide all kinds of help for parents who experience serious problems both during and after pregnancy. This kind of involvement does not get the publicity that pro-life rallies, protests, and political actions receive, but it is just as important if we are to ever be successful in the struggle against abortion.

• Now distribute Handout 6.1, "National Pro-Life Organizations." Observe that this is not a complete list but that it is representative. Further observe that many of these organizations strive to provide a variety of direct services, such as counseling, medical assistance, housing, adoption services, and physical and financial assistance—in addition to being

politically involved and working to educate the public regarding abortion.

• Conclude by observing that the struggle against abortion must be three-dimensional—involving education, political action, and direct services—if it is ever to be effective. Also note that another necessary dimension of preventing crisis pregnancies is related to achieving mastery of one's sexual feelings, practicing the virtue of chastity, and accepting responsibility for one's own behavior.

Explore Further

• (Note: In this context, it would be very effective, if possible, to have a guest speaker from a local group that is involved in providing direct services to persons with problem pregnancies.) As an alternative, distribute Handout 6.2, "Alternatives to Abortion." Review the statistics on the handout with the class.

• Form class into small groups. Distribute Handout 6.3, "What Can Be Done?" Instruct groups to discuss and complete the worksheet. When groups have had sufficient time, invite them to share their ideas with the class.

Apply

• Using the results of the "What Can Be Done?" worksheets, invite class to identify one action they will take as a total class in order to do their part in the pro-life struggle.

• Depending on what the class identifies, proceed to help them make practical plans for how they will go about this task. Or, if you have insufficient time now, set a time when this planning will take place.

• Conclude the Unit by asking students to complete Handout 6.4, "What Have You Learned?"

• Collect these, when finished, to use as a means of evaluating the success of the course. You might also try retesting the students after a period of some months to find out what they best remember.

- Conclude lesson by leading class in the closing prayer, presented on Handout 6.5, "Prayer for Life."

Optional Home Activities

- Invite students to keep their copy of "Prayer for Life," and to place it in a prominent place in their home where they will be reminded to pray it every day.

- Invite students to discuss with their parents how they as a family might become active in some practical way in one or more of the efforts of the pro-life movement in your local community.

Handout 6.1

Code: A = political action/lobbying
B = public education
C = direct service

National Pro-Life Organizations

National Right to Life Committee, Inc.
419 7th Street, NW
Suite 402
Washington, DC 20004 A, B, C

Right to Life Education Committee
920 Cherry SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49506 B

Christian Action Council
701 W. Broad Street
Falls Church, VA 22046 A, B, C

American Against Abortion
Box 70
Lindale, TX 75771 A, B, C

National Pro-Family Coalition
721 Second Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002 A, B

Americans United For Life
343 S. Dearborn
Suite 1804
Chicago, IL 60604 A, B

Crises Pregnancy Counseling Programs

Alternative to Abortion, International (AAI)
46 N. Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701

Bethany Christian Services
Telephone 800-BETHANY

Birthright International
Telephone 800–848-LOVE

Family Life Service/Save a Baby
Telephone 800–368–3336

Post-Abortion Counseling and Adoption Services

WEBA (Women Exploited by Abortion)
PO Box 267
Schoolcraft, MI 49087

Pregnancy Aftermath Helpline
4742 N. Sheffield Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53211

National Committee for Adoption
2025 M Street, NW
Suite 512
Washington, DC 20036

Bethany Christian Services
901 Eastern Avenue, NE
Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The American Adoption Agency
1611 Connecticut Ave., NW
Third Floor
Washington, DC 20009

Associations

American Life League, Inc.
PO Box 1350
Stafford, VA 22554

Adoption Option
PO Box 429327
Cincinnati, OH 45242

National Teens for Life
2785 High Peak Rd.
Rhinelander, WI 54501

Project Rachel
National Office of Post-Abortion
Reconciliation and Healing
3501 So. Lake Drive
PO Box 07477
Milwaukee, WI 53207–0477

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Handout 6.2 The Facts: Alternatives to Abortion

- Fifty percent of all abortions are sought by young unwed women. Such abortions could be eliminated by the practice of chastity. It is the best alternative to abortion prior to pregnancy.

- Almost 3,000 service providers operate nationwide to help women seeking alternatives to abortion. Together, they provide a variety of services, including prenatal care, medical assistance for both the mother and newborn, referral services, professional counseling, and adoption placement.

- More than four hundred of these centers now provide professional counseling to help women suffering from post-abortion trauma.

- Demand for adoption is high. At least four families, and by some estimates as many as twenty, are waiting to adopt each available child.

- Each year, only 50,000 children become available for adoption though hundreds of thousands of Americans are seeking to adopt.

- Adoptions of foreign children by United States citizens have risen steadily to more than 10,000 in 1987 (latest figures available).

- The rate of abortions per 1,000 live births is more than fifty times greater than the rate of adoptions. The annual U.S. rate of 1.6 million aborted children has reduced the potential number of adopted children.

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Handout 6.3 What Can Be Done?

Instructions: Listed below are certain pro-life activities. Discuss in your group possible practical ways your age group could become involved in each of these activities. List the suggestions of your group.

1. Promote chastity among teens.

2. Help educate other teens regarding the pro-life position (abortion kills *a baby,* not a "glob of tissues," and often does so in a very brutal way; pro-choice totally ignores the rights of the baby and of the father; abortion can have serious side effects for the woman).

3. Support and participate in a local pro-life group's demonstrations and similar public activities sponsored by the group.

4. Find out what kind of volunteer activities are needed by local pro-life groups (help with mailings, answering phones, and so on), and then volunteer.

5. Help promote political action leading to the change of the present abortion legislation.

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Handout 6.4 What Have You Learned?

Instructions: Answer the following questions as honestly as you can.

1. Describe how your thinking about abortion has changed as a result of these classes.

2. What did you learn in these classes that has most impressed you?

3. In what ways, if any, do you personally plan to help support the pro-life movement as a result of these classes?

4. Do you have any other comments you would like to make regarding these classes?

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Handout 6.5 Prayer for Life

Scripture Reading: Romans 8:18–27

Leader: Creator God, we call on You, whose power within us can do immeasurably more than we can dare to ask or imagine. Inspire us to share our future in such a way that our lives may become more life-giving and growth-filled. Continue to call us through moments of doubt and through moments of joy as we respond to new life in every situation.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us move . . .
(Side 1 and Side 2 alternate responses)

1. from thoughts that weaken . . .
2. to promises that inspire;

1. from bitterness . . .
2. to forgiveness;

1. from judging others . . .
2. to recognizing each person's human dignity;

1. from ignoring injustice . . .
2. to fighting against it, even at the risk of being unpopular;

1. from indifference . . .
2. to enthusiasm;

1. from feelings of helplessness and pessimism in the face of evil . . .
2. to confidence and hope in God's saving presence and power;

1. from self-pity and preoccupation with our own little concerns . . .
2. to compassion for the real suffering of those around us;

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1. from undisciplined hostility toward our enemies . . .
2. to dialogue, reconciliation, and positive efforts to promote justice.

Leader: As we share and work together to bring about the justice and peace of Your kingdom, we pray, Lord God, for the gift of new insights, greater energy, and mutual support in this struggle. Just as You show us boundless generosity and continually pour out Your gifts upon us, help us to be generous with our time, our talent, and our treasure in the service of all our brothers and sisters who suffer injustice and degradation in our society. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Your Son, who died for all of us so that we may all have the fullness of life.

All: Amen.

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Appendix: Fetal Development Visuals

The visuals in this section may be copied as additional handouts to increase students' understanding of the stages of human development in the womb.

First Month

Size: about 1/4 inch

The baby's heart is beating, and the brain is unmistakably human in proportion. The baby has eyes, ears, kidneys, a liver, a mouth and an umbilical cord.

Second Month

Size: about 1 1/2 inches

The baby's skeleton is complete. Her hands and fingers are beginning to form. She can move. The buds of milk (baby) teeth are appearing. Ankles, knees, and toes can be made out. Her brain waves can be measured on an EEG. The baby responds to touch.

Third Month

Size: about 3 inches

The baby is now clearly either a boy or a girl. If an object is placed in the palm of the baby's hand, he will grasp it. He can make a fist. By the end of this month, the baby's body is essentially built.

Fourth Month

Size: about 9 inches

The baby's brain has begun the maturing process that will not be completed until the baby is about fourteen years old. Right now, the baby is growing very rapidly. The eyelids are sealed together and won't open again until about the seventh month. The baby's body is covered with fine downy hair. Fingernails and toenails appear; fingers and toes have their own unique prints. The baby's mouth opens and closes and swallowing can be detected.

Fifth Month

Size: about 12 inches

The baby's eyelashes have become apparent. She has developed a sucking reflex and can suck her thumb.

Sixth Month

Size: about 14 inches

The baby continues to gain weight and grow longer. He can now respond to sound.

Seventh Month

Size: now weighs about 2 1/2 pounds

The baby's grip is perfected and is even stronger now than it will be shortly after birth. The hair on the baby's head is growing longer, and the downy covering on the rest of the body is disappearing. The baby's eyelids are open again.

Eighth Month

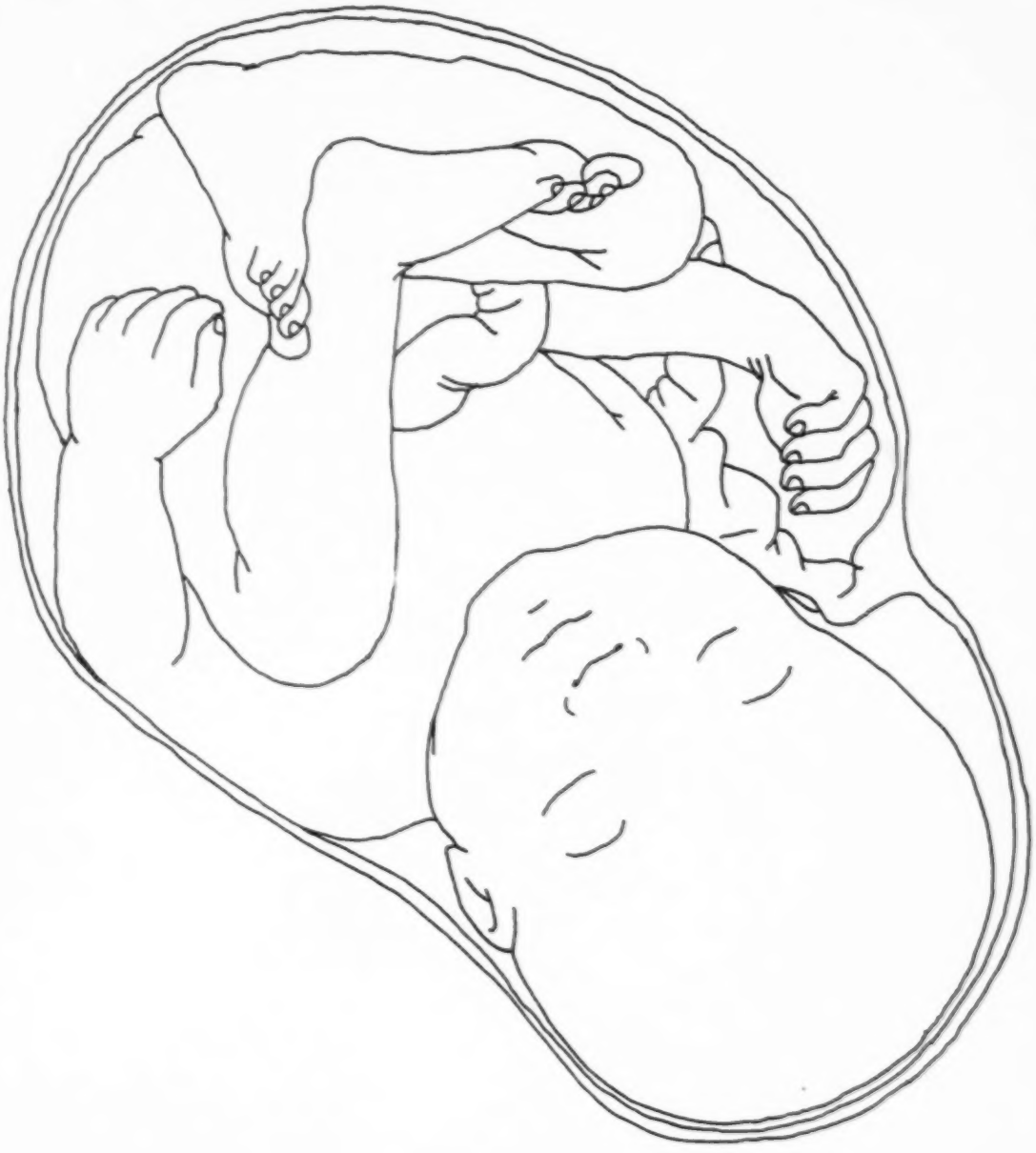
Size: weighs about 4 pounds

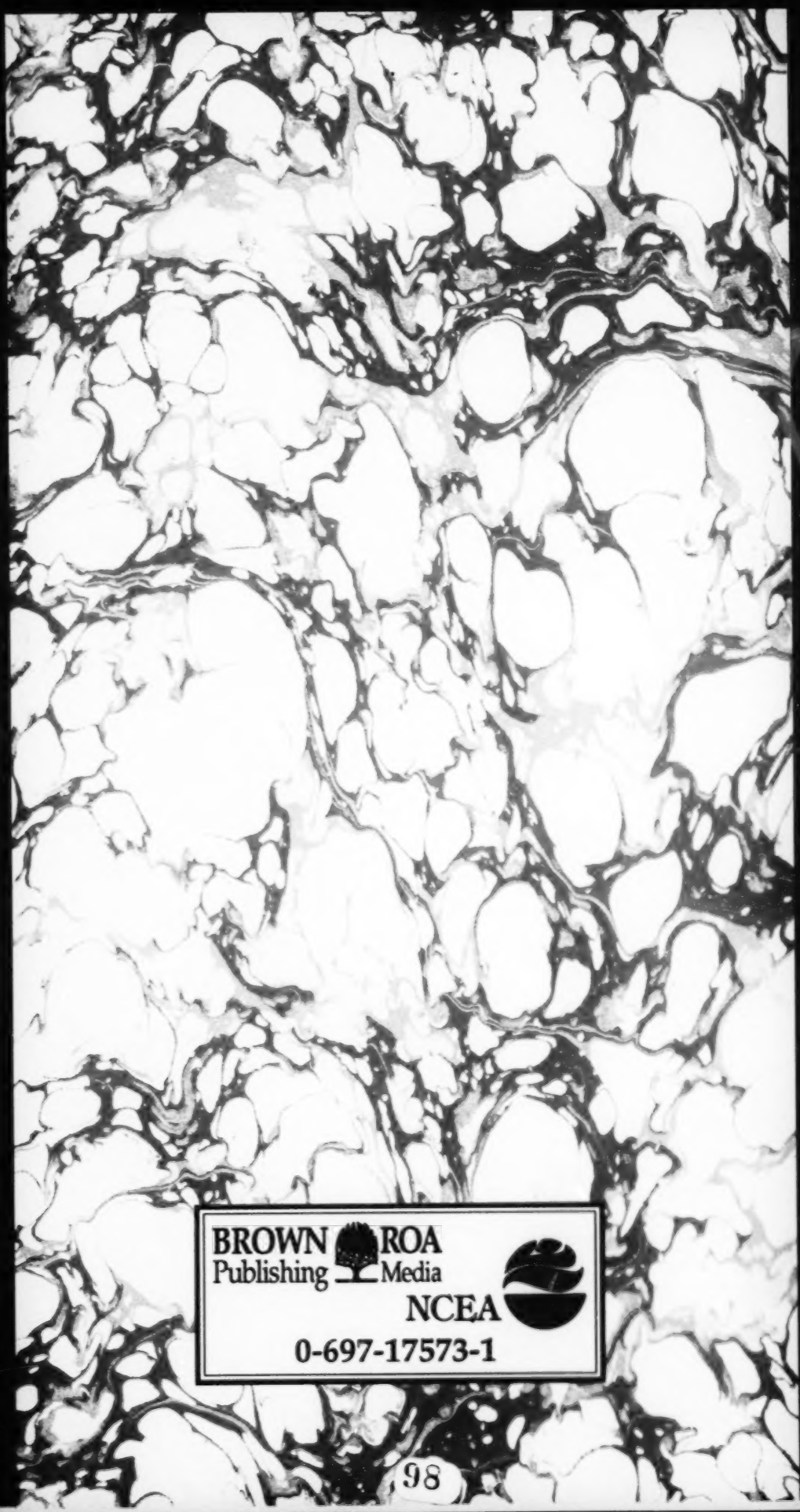
The baby continues to gain weight. He is also developing a protective padding of fat that will keep him warm after his birth.

Ninth Month

Size: weighs about 7 1/2 pounds

The baby is about twenty inches long. She has shifted her position in her mother's womb is nearly ready to be born. After birth, she will continue her human growth process for approximately the next seventy years.

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